JACK HARKAWAY AFLOAT AND ASHORE

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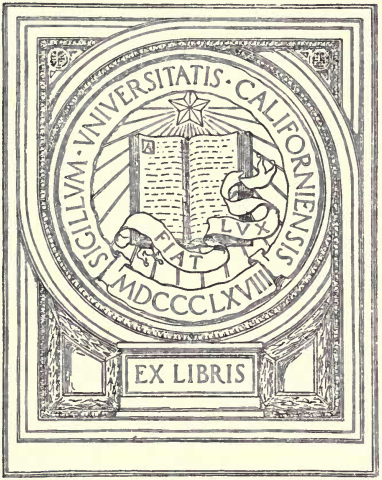

'MONDAY JERKED HUNSTON'S ARM, SO THAT THE BALL WENT THROUGH THE ROOF.'

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JACK HARKAWAY'S

Adventures Afloat and Ashore

A SEQUEL TO

JACK HARKAWAY AFTER SCHOOLDAYS

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JACK HARKAWAY'S ADVENTURES AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT did you want to upset the council for? They don't understand your ventriloquism," continued Hunston.

"I was getting dull in that shed place where you shut me up—awfully slow in fact; and when I heard you fellows enjoying yourselves, and having a bit of a barney, I thought I'd join in, and sing you Rule Britannia, or something lively."

"I shall never have the same influence over the Pisangs again. Look how they are fighting!"

"The Kilkenny cats are nothing to them," Jack remarked.

"Say something and stop them; you can do it!" exclaimed Hunston.

"And get taken back to be hanged. Thank you, no!" replied Jack.

"I'll promise you your life."

"Will you?"

"Yes, I will, indeed."

"What is your promise worth, do you think?" answered Jack, derisively. "You'd tell a bushel of lies for a dollar."

"You must trust me for old acquaintance' sake. Stop the row, and give them a specimen of your ventriloquial powers. It will put them in a good humour."

"You're very kind," Jack said. "Perhaps they'd enjoy the entertainment very much, especially as the show wouldn't cost them anything. But I'm sorry I can't stop."

"Can't stop? What do you mean?" said Hunston, laying his hand on his arm.

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"Paws off, Pompey!" cried Jack, angrily. "If you want a domino, just say which eye you would prefer to be temporarily darkened."

"But I say you can't go. You must stop. You're a prisoner," continued Hunston.

Jack's knife flashed before his eyes, and he retreated further into the corner.

Taking up a lamp which stood near, Jack looked at it.

The wick, made of a bit of dry pitch, floated in the half of a cocoanut filled with oil.

"It will do," he said.

"Do!" repeated Hunston. "Do for what?"

"You'll see if you live long enough. Thought you were going to hang me, did you?" replied Jack, laughing.

He held the lamp to one side of the council chamber.

It was built entirely of bamboo, which, being as dry as tinder, was exceedingly inflammable.

"You'll set the place on fire!" exclaimed Hunston, in alarm.

"Just what occurred to me, my pippin; and as the wind is rather high, I shouldn't wonder if all Palembang was to go to blazes before morning," Jack answered.

"Help! here, he's——" began Hunston, when the point of Jack's knife penetrated the clothes he wore and pricked his breast.

"Do you want to go to kingdom come?" said Jack.

"No," muttered Hunston, sullenly.

"Then shut up. I don't want to kill you now; but necessity has no law, and if you utter a sound I will kill you."

The bamboo framework had by this time caught fire, and the flames began to spread with a loud crackling noise.

Those Pisangs who had been fighting were getting tired of the amusement.

The elder chiefs, who had been trying to pacify the combatants, were beginning to succeed in their efforts.

"Good-bye," said Jack.

"You shan't go! I'll——"

Jack looked for a moment as if he was going to use his knife.

But he put it in his belt, and, clenching his fists, let Hunston have what he called "one, two."

Hunston fell back half-stunned before Jack's sledge-hammer fists.

His hat fell off, and Jack took it up and put it on. It was made of straw and it had a conical shape.

"Rummy sort of tile," mused Jack, "but I suppose it is a badge of distinction, or something. "I'll sport it, and they may take me for him; not that I shall be flattered at the mistake, only it may help me to make tracks."

The flames had made incredible progress in the few minutes that had elapsed since Jack set fire to the bamboo framework with the lamp.

"They'd better call out the engines and send for the fire escape," Jack said to himself, indulging in that dry humour which he could not resist even in the hour of extreme danger.

The thick smoke and the crackling of the fire alarmed every one.

In an instant the din ceased, the uproar had subsided, and the men who had been struggling together in a sort of Irish row, looked blankly at one another.

Jack passed quickly amongst the crowd.

They raised a cry of "Fire! fire!" and ran hither and thither wildly.

A panic had seized them.

Suddenly Hunston, who had picked himself up, shouted, in a commanding voice, which trembled with rage—

"Guard the door! The prisoner has done this! Let him not escape!"

Cries of "Guard the door!" "The white prisoner!" "Death to the prisoner!" arose on all sides.

"It's getting hot," said Jack to himself. "I wasted precious time with that beast Hunston."

The smoke grew thicker, and obscured the feeble light of the oil lamps, many of which had been extinguished in the scuffle.

This dimness was much in his favour.

It was at the door itself where the real peril lay.

There Buru and some others, including the Tuan Biza, whose faces presented the appearance of so many crushed tomatoes, had congregated.

"Now for it!" exclaimed Jack, as he was within a few paces of the door. "Never say die!"

CHAPTER II.

ACROSS THE BRIDGE.

It had not been Jack's hope or intention to escape when he determined to visit the council.

The idea was suggested by his natural daring and love of fun.

He thought it would create a sensation of some sort, and give him an opportunity ; which it had done.

How he would be able to avail himself of that opportunity was another thing.

So far he had succeeded beyond his expectations.

He had got up ill blood between Hunston and his savage friends.

The Tuan Biza and the other chiefs had engaged in a dreadful riot, which had resulted in more than one broken head.

Hunston had been " chaffed and punched," as Jack said, when he was reckoning up the damage afterwards.

And to crown all, the council-chamber was in flames, the chiefs in frantic terror, and only a few cool hands guarding the door in obedience to Hunston's ill-timed summons.

Such was the situation of affairs.

Up to the present time Jack had decidedly the best of it.

One of Buru's eyes was rapidly closing, and the other wasn't of much use.

But he had heard Hunston's voice, and with native cunning guessed that the prisoner had set the place on fire, hoping to escape in the inevitable hubbub that would ensue.

" If," he argued, " Hunston is at one end of the council-chamber, he can't be at the other."

He did not believe that even a white chief, clever though he might be, could be in two places at one time.

So Jack's conical hat did not impose upon him.

Imitating Hunston's voice again, Jack said, as he reached the door—

" Let me out, my good Buru. I am Hunston, the white chief."

"You are the prisoner," replied Buru. "Yield yourself to me."

Jack's only reply was to draw his knife, and plunge it up to the hilt in his body.

Buru fell without a sound.

The Pisangs saw the deed committed and were silent for a moment through terror and amazement.

But an instant afterwards a dozen spears were levelled at him, and half as many ugly-looking clubs aimed at his head.

Cutting right and left with his knife, he backed through the crowd.

He reached the burning portion of the apartment, which was fringed by an eager knot of spectators.

The wall was nearly burnt through, and the roof had fallen in.

Fierce cries assailed him, and if he hesitated he was lost.

Hunston made a snatch at him, hoping to hold him fast till he could get assistance.

But Jack threw him off, saying, "You didn't do it that time, old boy!" and dashed boldly into the burning space, and falling timber.

With a wild plunge he dashed through the hole in the wall, and, half-blinded, half-suffocated, found himself outside.

The air was cool and refreshing.

At present the alarm of fire had not spread, and the inhabitants of Palembang were sleeping in fancied security.

His hair was singed, and his hat was on fire.

This he cast from him as a useless encumbrance, and taking one look at the burning building, ran at full speed up the street.

When his enemies had recovered from their surprise, they rushed through the open door, and gave chase.

Hunston was at their head.

"After him!" he cried. "He will take to the woods. After him! He cannot escape. Brave will be the chief who takes his head, and all the women of Palembang will smile upon him."

Jack's form could be clearly seen in the moonlight.

The pursuer's halted at the extremity of the town, satisfied that they knew the direction the fugitive had taken.

They held a brief conversation, which resulted in twelve chiefs, with Hunston in command, being told off to pursue the runaway.

The rest returned to the burning council-chamber, to assist in putting out the fire, which had assumed formidable dimensions.

No sooner had Jack reached the open ground than he turned round, and skirted the town to throw the Pisangs off the scent.

They would imagine that he would go straight on, and he might gain a secure shelter in the woods.

As he moderated his pace and went round the town, he could hear the cries of the affrighted populace.

Gongs were beaten in every direction.

Dense clouds of smoke and bright flashes of flame showed him that the fire, driven by the wind, had seized on other dwellings, and was making great havoc and devastation.

"It's as good as burning out a wasp's nest," he remarked.

For more than two hours he ran without halting.

It was his impression that when those who followed him found themselves at fault they would return to the burning town.

Three separate parties of explorers would be formed, and despatched in various directions.

When day broke, he had reached a dense forest, and feeling tired, he climbed into a tree to enjoy a little rest.

Lashing himself with his handkerchief to a bough, he closed his eyes.

For some time he could not go to sleep, owing to the sharp hiss of the serpents and the dread cries of the wild beasts.

He thought with horror of Sinbad the Sailor when in a similar position.

Sinbad had two companions with him, and they were lower down in a tree.

On the first night a huge snake climbed up, and dragged down one of the men.

Would the snakes of this island attempt to gratify their appetites in a similar manner?

"No serpent shall land me," he said to himself. "I'll sleep with one eye open."

But at length exhausted nature had its way, and he slept soundly.

Not for long, however.

He was awake before the sun had acquired any considerable power, and unlashing himself, he descended the tree.

All nature was smiling under the grateful night dew and the cheering sun's rays.

He pushed on slowly through the forest, not daring to retrace his steps.

His only hope was to subsist in the jungle as best he might until his friends from Limbi had come over and captured the island, if they could succeed in doing so.

He felt sure that Harvey was doing his utmost for him.

But he did not suspect the length to which Harvey's devotion had led him.

Nor did he even faintly imagine that he and Monday were at that very time on the island.

"Dick won't desert me," he thought. "DICK will stick to me like a leech. That's one comfort."

He was in high spirits as he slowly trudged along through the dense underwood.

To have outwitted the Pisangs, bearded Hunston amongst his friends, and set the town of Palembang on fire was no slight achievement.

Suddenly he felt a peculiar smarting and itching sensation at the ankle.

Looking down, he found his socks stained with blood.

Turning them down, he saw both ankles perfectly fringed with little insects like leeches, which had filled themselves till they were ready to burst.

Some of the bloodsuckers had even crawled down to his foot, and made an incision which allowed the blood to trickle through his shoe.

Jack had heard of these annoying and disquieting pests from Monday.

Sometimes the stinging worms would drop from the leaves of the trees upon the heads and into the necks of those who pass under them.

It was almost unendurable to think that they were lancing him and sucking out his blood.

However, he knocked them off as well as he could, and travelled onwards.

At length he came to a river which ran through a ravine, the rocky bottom of which churned its impetuous waters into foam.

Cautiously making his way by the side of the rocky channel, Jack pushed along in a listless manner.

He wished to find a cave in which he could rest, with a few palms in the vicinity to supply him with cocoanuts.

He had not gone far before he came to a hanging bridge, which was thrown across the ravine.

On each side was a road, if an ordinary clearing in the forest might be dignified with that name.

It was a suspension bridge of rattan; at the middle it rested on the tops of tall trees, which grew up from a small island in the torrent below.

It was constructed by stretching across these large rattans.

On these, narrow slips of board were placed and fastened at each end; other rattans starting from the ground on the bank, passed above the branches of high camphor trees that grew on the edge of the chasm in which the torrent flowed; descending from these branches in a sharp curve, they rose again steeply at the further end of the bridge.

From these rattans were fastened other rattans below them, just as in our own suspension bridges, and thus all parts were made to aid in supporting the weight.

As it was so light, it vibrated and shook terribly when any one ventured to cross it.

Jack had been told of these bridges, of which there are several in the islands, and had been cautioned against grasping the side, lest it might swing over and cast him in the abyss.

The difficulty in crossing this bridge, which was flexible as a manilla rope, was so great because it oscillated from left to right, and its whole floor did not move in one piece, but like a series of rolling waves.

"I don't think I'll venture across that," said Jack. "But I'll go down the rocks if I can manage it, and have a drink of water."

As he was speaking, he heard a loud shout behind him.

The next moment an arrow buried itself in a tree close to him.

He looked round, and saw a party of Pisangs, probably

forming one of the divisions that had been sent out to search for him.

Now he blamed himself for his folly in not remaining hidden.

He could not have acted more foolishly than exposing himself to view on one of the few public roads in the island.

To retreat into the forest, was to court instant death or capture.

The road was blocked.

The sides of the ravine were just there almost perpendicular, and impossible of descent.

If he would escape, there was nothing for it but a bold attempt to cross the dangerous bridge.

Without any further hesitation, he got on the bridge, with a hurried walk, which he hoped would break up the rolling motion.

It was nearly four hundred feet long.

Having got half-way across the first span, he saw that one of the cross-boards, on which he was in the act of placing his foot, had become loose, and slipped on to one side.

He drew back, for had he gone on carelessly, he must have fallen through, and been dashed to pieces on the rocks below.

Stopping instantly, he stood still, and the bridge swung to and fro, as if it was being purposely shaken.

The Pisangs continued to fire arrows at him, but the motion of the bridge interfered with the correctness of their aim.

Going on again, he reached the centre, and reconnoitred his enemies.

One Pisang, more adventurous than the rest, was following him.

"Wait a bit!" said Jack between his teeth.

He had gained confidence now, and crossed the remaining half at a quick run, hiding himself behind a tree when on land.

The Pisangs shouted to one another, and flattered themselves that their prey was not far off.

When the whole five were together, on the second half, Jack slashed away with his knife at the supports of rattan.

Three or four parted, and the remaining ones, unable to

support the weight, snapped with a loud sharp crack, like the report of a pistol.

The large rattans that supported the sides, and went over the high branches of the camphor trees, had parted.

Then the bridge gave a fearful lurch, and finally the whole structure fell with a crash into the boiling torrent.

Fearful cries arose from the poor wretches thus hurled into eternity, but Jack smiled grimly, for it was their lives or his, and again he had triumphed.

His exultation was premature, however.

Straight in front of him, he saw five more Pisangs, who were attracted by the cries of their countrymen.

They hurried forward, but all was still.

Probably the party had divided, one half crossing the bridge, the other, which had perished, remaining behind.

They peered down the sides of the ravine, and talked hurriedly among themselves.

One, more curious than the rest, examined the rattans, and saw that they had been cut with a knife.

He pointed this out to his companions.

Yells of fury arose, and Jack, who was gently stealing off along the road, was perceived.

Instantly a hue and cry was raised.

"Now for it!" thought Jack, as he scudded along the road. "I must step out, or make up my mind to be cooked for dinner, and eaten without salt."

He had a slight start, but it was a question whether or not he would keep it.

His pursuers made the woods echo again with their savage outcries.

Jack's training in hare-and-hounds, at Mr. Crawcour's academy for young gentlemen, stood him in good stead now.

It was a race for life.

CHAPTER III.

THE RACE FOR LIFE.

As the Pisangs knew the road and the country so much better than he did, Jack was afraid to take refuge in the forest again.

He ran on at the top of his speed, not daring to turn round to look how the chase progressed, lest he should lose time.

No arrows were fired at him; no spears thrown.

Either the Pisangs had received orders to bring him back alive, or they would not stop to adjust their bows, or hurl their spears.

It scarcely could be that they had regard for his life, or an arrow would not have been shot at him when he was bent on his perilous journey across the bridge.

Good runner as he was, he had not gone more than three or four miles before he felt his strength failing him.

Jack's head grew dizzy, and his legs seemed to drag one after the other.

The wound inflicted upon him when captured had caused him to lose blood.

This would create weakness, and even vertigo, if compelled to undergo unwonted exertion.

For some hours he had not had anything to eat and drink.

He was also running under a hot sun, which made the perspiration pour from him in streams. All this told against him.

The Pisangs had nothing to impede the free exercise of their limbs.

He had.

Therefore he was at an additional disadvantage.

"I'm coopered," was Jack's mental exclamation.

He turned round and saw the pursuers had him well in hand—three in front, two behind.

They had never once lost sight of him.

On they came; bodies a little inclined forward, elbows pressed into the side, legs going like machines.

"They've got the wind of a bellows," Jack said with a groan. "I shouldn't care if I had anything to fight with."

Like the stag, hunted to the extremity of his endurance, he turned round, faced his pursuers, and stood at bay.

"I'll die with my eyes open," he exclaimed; "at least, I'll see what kills me, and how it's done. It'll be a comfort to know the *modus operandi*."

When the Pisangs saw that he did not run any further, they halted also.

The foremost made signs that they wanted to speak, and Jack said that he was listening.

"Are you armed?" asked the Pisang.

"No; you can see I'm not. I shouldn't have cut and run if I had had anything to fight with," exclaimed Jack. "That was why I heaved anchor."

"O white chief," continued the Pisang, "come back with us to the ruins of our city, for Palembang is now in ashes."

"That's a blessing, only it will make the beggars more savage," said Jack.

"You must die the death that has been decided on; I can hold out no hope of mercy, but I doubt not you will die like a brave man."

"That depends upon circumstances. What is this particularly pleasant death?"

"It is the punishment of the stake. Every warrior in Pisang will be entitled to cut off a piece of your flesh, about an inch square in size, till all the flesh is gone and nothing but bones remain."

"Thank you, then I shan't come," said Jack, in his usual careless manner.

The Pisang raised his bow.

"You can tell them I am much obliged for their kind invitation, but I have a previous appointment in another direction. I hope to enjoy the pleasure another time."

"The white chief cannot escape; his Pisang enemy will shoot him down and carry him wounded to the city," replied the warrior.

"Let fly," exclaimed Jack impatiently, "perhaps I can dodge you after all."

He remembered his knife, and prepared to dash forward and close with his assailants, so as to perish, as it were, sword in hand.

The Pisang did not waste any further time in talk.

He drew his bow to its utmost capacity of tension.

The arrow quivered on the string.

Suddenly there was a loud report, and the Pisang, struck with a leaden messenger of death, fell heavily forward on his face.

Three other reports made themselves heard, and as many Pisangs fell; and the fifth, stricken with a deadly terror, plunged into the tangled depths of the forest and was seen no more.

Jack could scarcely bring himself to believe in the evidence of his senses.

Guns in Pisang, and people to fire them; and what is more to fire them on his behalf!

The age of miracles was come back again.

"If that isn't Dick's doings," he muttered, "it must be something that rhymes with Dick, and that's Old Nick."

Just then two forms emerged from some dense brushwood.

One was Harvey, and the other Monday.

Advancing towards Jack, they shook him cordially by the hand.

Monday danced and capered about in the wildest glee.

Jack was too much affected to be able to speak for some seconds.

"Well, my cockalorum, how goes it?" exclaimed Harvey.

"Dick," replied Harkaway, "how you managed it I don't know, but you came up just in time to save my life, and I'm deeply grateful for it."

"Don't say anything about that, old fellow," answered Harvey. "I'm modestly inclined, and don't like to be praised."

"I was dead beat; a four-mile run in this climate is a pipe-opener, I can tell you, and it was six to four on the niggers."

"I knew you'd want me, and that's why I came."

"Have you landed in force?" asked Jack.

"No; Monday and I are alone."

"Have you ventured, all by yourselves, into the enemies' country for my sake?" asked Jack, deeply moved.

"Why not? You don't think we came to explore the beauties of Pisang, in the interests of high art, do you?"

"Not exactly; but it is more than I had a right to expect."

"It is not. You had a right to expect that we should do everything we could for you," returned Harvey; "and as the bloated old Limbi chief wasn't ready, we put on steam and started. If you'd sent us a telegram we should have made a move sooner."

"There is such a thing as electricity of the heart, Dick; and I think our hearts spoke to one another," said Jack Harkaway.

"Very likely I dreamt about you, and I thought you wanted me. Didn't I, Mon?" said Harvey.

"Yes, sare. You say 'Go to Mast' Jack. He in much big danger,' and so we come," replied the black.

"You arrived in the nick of time. I was sewed up—regularly licked."

"Tell us all about it. What have you done?"

"I've seen Emily, and made it all square with her," replied Jack. "I've cheeked Hunston, and got up a small Donnybrook Fair in the council-chamber. I've been the death of six Pisangs and I've burnt Palembang to the ground."

"By George, Jack, you're a wonder! Explain all this to me," said Harvey in astonishment.

"I will directly. It was more a fluke after all, than anything else; but just now I'm like a parched pea. Can you lay your hands on any civilised or uncivilised sort of grub?"

"Certainly we can. Our ship is hidden not far off, and we have a few odds and ends in her. I'm not exactly a pocket Soyer, or a sea-cook, but I can rig you up a good breakfast."

"Fire away, then. If it's boiled snake I'm on, like a hundred bricks," replied Jack.

Harvey gave Jack his arm, for he trembled violently and needed support.

They walked to the shore, where the boat was concealed, and were quickly engaged in discussing an excellent breakfast, when we consider the materials they had to work with.

A kettle was boiled, and some tea made from some of the Hyson found on board the wreck.

This was very grateful and cheering.

After he had satisfied his appetite, and gained the strength he stood so much in need of, Jack related his adventures to Harvey.

"By Jove!" replied the latter, "you had a closer shave than even I imagined."

"I saw Hunston meant it," answered Jack "and that put me more on my mettle."

"You are all right now, thank goodness; and the best thing we can do is to jump on board, and set sail for Limbi," remarked Harvey.

"No," replied Jack shortly.

"What!" cried Harvey in astonishment; "do you want to stop here?"

"That's precisely what I mean to do."

"Are you mad?"

"I don't think so. All I want from you, Dick, is a rifle and a few charges of powder and shot."

"But think a bit, the Pisangs will have you; it's a moral. You've burnt their city, and they'll swarm all over the place after you."

"I'll chance it. We can but die once."

Harvey reflected a moment.

"The Limbians won't be here for a day or two. You know what slow coaches they are, as well as I do," he exclaimed.

"I've got work to do here, Dick."

"What work?"

"Can't you guess?" asked Jack.

"No; hang me if I can!" replied Harvey.

"Then I will tell you. But first of all, give me another half cocoanutful of that Souchong, or whatever it is."

Harvey did so, and Jack proceeded to drink the tea with calm enjoyment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STRATAGEM.

THE sun was now rising high in the heavens.

Jack began to get merry.

"I'll trouble you, Mr. Monday," he said, "for another of those dried fish. They're not equal to bloaters, but they're not bad."

"Um dried fish, sare? Yes, sare, very fine," replied Monday.

"I didn't ask you for your opinion; the fish is quite sufficient. You can dry up," answered Jack.

Harvey was dying with impatience to know what Jack's intentions were, though the latter did not show any signs of being in a hurry to gratify his curiosity.

"Fine day," said Jack, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, in the absence of a pocket handkerchief.

"What's the use of telling a fellow that, when it always is fine here?" answered Harvey.

"Don't ruffle your feathers, Dick! As I'm going to stop in the island, I like to study the signs of the weather."

"What are you going to stay for?"

"Can't you guess?"

"I've told you I can't once," replied Harvey. "I never was good at riddles, as a kid."

"But you're not a kid now, and you ought to have improved. Why does a miller wear a white hat?"

"To keep his head warm, I suppose."

"Exactly," replied Jack. "That shows you're not quite a Simple Simon."

Harvey looked angry, and pressing his lips together, remained silent.

"Dick, you've lost something," exclaimed Jack quickly.

"Have I? What?" asked Harvey.

"Only your tongue, that's all. You're sulking because I won't speak fast enough for you. Did they teaze the poor old boy?" cried Jack coaxingly.

"Go on; I don't mind," replied Harvey.

"Forgive me, Dick. I feel so jolly at getting away from those Pisangs that I must chaff or die," exclaimed Jack in a good-natured voice. "You would if you were me."

"So I should, Jack. I'm not angry."

"It's so freezingly delightful—that's the phrase out here—to have licked the skunks, that I can't help exuberating."

"That's a big word," said Harvey, smiling.

"Big words suit the occasion," answered Jack; "and now I'll tell you why I want to stay here. Emily is in the hands of the Pisangs; and, what is worse, in the power of that brute Hunston, who is a Pisang double distilled."

"I see; don't say any more, Jack. I was an unfeeling wretch not to think of that before," Harvey hastened to say.

"I don't want you to stay," continued Jack. "We

may be Damon and Pythias, but it would be too much to ask you to play the part of Pythias, to empty boxes."

"No, it wouldn't; and the boxes wouldn't be empty, for my heart and my conscience are big enough to fill the house."

"Close the show," exclaimed Jack. "You're a good sort; you're a trump, and you shall help me to rescue Emily."

"Or die in the attempt."

"Good again, Dick; they've got to kill us though, now we have these little pop-guns;" and Jack handled the rifle and revolver which Monday had given him, looking at them affectionately.

"Monday help too, rescue Missey Em'ly," cried Monday.

"So you shall. All hands are welcome," replied Jack.

"You should have seen Monday's get-up before we left Limbi; there was a wreck—all the crew dead, and we had the first overhaul," exclaimed Harvey.

"What did he do?" asked Jack.

"Togged himself out till he was quite nobby, didn't you, Mon?"

"Never mind," replied Monday; "me show Mast' Jack, one of these days. All very fine, make fun of poor Monday; him know what him do know."

"Don't be riled, Prince Matabella," continued Harvey; "you shall sport your things when we get back again."

Monday retired to pack up the remains of the breakfast, and from the way in which he talked to himself in his own language, he did not seem very well pleased at the ridicule Harvey cast upon his newly-acquired European clothes.

To him, his attire was simply perfect.

It whipped that of his young masters altogether, and threw Mr. Mole's rather shabby dress quite into the shade.

"You say you have seen Emily?" observed Harvey.

"Yes, I did enjoy that happiness, but not for long, and under very trying circumstances," replied Jack.

"I should have liked to see you stir up the chiefs in Palembang; what a lark it must have been."

"It wasn't all fun. I must confess I was in a dismal funk all the time."

"What do you think of doing about Emily?" asked Harvey.

"I fancy," replied Jack, "that as the city is burned down, they will all be up a tree; that is to say, camped out anywhere, and in the confusion we might make a dash."

"Just like a man-of-war's boats cutting out an armed vessel in harbour."

"Something of that sort," answered Jack.

"When shall you try it on?"

"To-morrow. I'm so knocked out of time that I must sleep all day."

"I'll join you. Suppose we sleep under this tree, and leave Monday to watch," said Harvey.

"That's the idea," replied Jack. "Call him; I'm so beastly tired, and can't raise my voice."

"Monday," cried Harvey. "You're wanted."

"What um want him for, Mast' Harvey?" asked Monday.

"We're going to recruit exhausted nature; in other words, to sleep, and you must keep a good look-out. If you don't——"

"What then, sare?"

"We'll get some chemical stuff and turn you white."

"He! he!" laughed Monday. "You have um joke, Mast' Harvey."

"You'll find it no joke, when you're all cream and no chocolate. So keep your eyes open, and stick something under your eyelids."

Monday promised to exercise the greatest vigilance, and there was some necessity for it.

The Pisangs were evidently swarming about the island in pursuit of Jack.

A party might discover them, and if no watch was kept they would be surprised before they could use their guns.

In a very short time Jack and Harvey were fast asleep. They had every confidence in Monday.

The latter stood near the trunk of the tree, rifle in hand, revolver in his belt, and looked searchingly by turns in every direction.

"Monday like to see um Pisang take him in," he muttered. "Monday smell um Pisang mile off."

A couple of hours passed, and the heat of the day was at its height.

Monday, like all the other natives of the islands, owned the power of the sun at this particular time.

He felt drowsy, and had the greatest difficulty in keeping himself awake.

His eyes closed, and he was aroused in a short time by a slight noise.

A large monkey of the ourang-outang species had crept up, and was hurrying off with his rifle, which he had placed against a tree.

He did not like to take Jack's or Harvey's, for they had put them under their heads, to be ready at a moment's notice.

If he touched them he should wake them.

So he followed the monkey.

It went slowly into the forest, and Monday, not caring to go into the jungle after it, drew a revolver from his belt and fired.

The monkey threw up his ungainly arms and fell upon its back.

Monday advanced to gain possession of his rifle, and was astonished to find the skin fall off.

A full-grown Pisang was revealed to his view.

It was a disguise.

As he stooped to take possession of his rifle half-a-dozen strong hands seized him.

He had fallen into a trap.

The Pisang who had assumed the disguise had paid the penalty with his life.

But he had enabled his companions to succeed in their enterprise.

Almost before he could realise the fact, Monday was strongly bound.

He cast his eyes towards Jack and Harvey, and found that a score of dusky figures were busily engaged in securing them.

They had been surprised while they slept.

"Hullo," cried Jack, as he felt himself strongly grasped. "What's this?"

"Monday—Monday!" cried Harvey.

"You may go through all the days in the week, and it won't help you," said a voice in his ear.

He looked up. "Hunston!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, my boy. We've been one too many for you," said Hunston, with a malevolent laugh

Monday was marched up to the spot where his young masters were safely bound.

He hung down his head and was ashamed to speak.

"This is your fault," said Harvey angrily.

"They come one dodge over Monday, Mast' Harvey. Him think it um monkey and shoot, but then it too late," replied Monday.

"It's no good howling," said Jack. "We're copped and there's an end of it."

"I'm glad to see you bear it with resignation." rejoined Hunston. "When I set out after you I did not expect to make such a haul as this."

"Didn't it burn well? It was a proper flare-up. I mean Palembang," said Jack, smiling

"You'll suffer all the more for it, and we can make another gallows, big enough for the three of you," answered Hunston.

Jack laughed again

"You'll laugh on the wrong side of your face soon," said Hunston.

"Not I," answered Jack; "I haven't got a wrong side. I leave that sort of thing to you. I can't help laughing when I see you."

"Let them laugh who win," replied Hunston savagely.

He spoke a few words to his attendants, and the Pisangs placed themselves in a triple line round the captives.

Their legs were free, though their arms were tightly bound behind their backs.

Hunston took their revolvers from them and placed them in his own belt.

The rifle he told the Pisangs to carry.

"March!" he cried.

The party moved forward, going towards the interior.

"Cheer up, Dick," said Harkaway.

"I'm all right," said Harvey. "Only I can't help thinking that Monday——"

"Don't bully the poor beggar. They had him just as they might have had you or me. It was a dodge," interrupted Jack.

"Silence, there! No talking," cried Hunston.

"Who are you when you're at home?" asked Jack, with his usual impudence.

Hunston, delighted to have a pistol again, flourished it in his face.

"Shut up," he said, "or I'll let you know."

"Will you?"

"Yes; and I'll pistol the first who disobeys my orders. Silence! March!"

The prisoners moved on again, and not a word was spoken.

"Don't rile him," whispered Harvey. "It is as well to bide our time."

Jack made no reply, but his pale face and compressed lips showed that evil thoughts were passing through his mind.

He regretted now that he had not killed Hunston the night before, when he had the chance.

But the chance was gone.

It was too late to think of that now.

CHAPTER V.

GRIN AND BEAR IT.

THE captives were placed in the midst of a guard, and the procession, if such it can be called, started for the ruins of Palembang.

Jack, Harvey, and Monday were together, their arms being bound behind them.

"It's all your fault, Monday," said Jack, with just the least tinge of anger in his tone.

"How on earth he could be such an ass, I don't know," said Harvey.

"Monday one fool," said the black. "Him deserve to be eaten."

"Perhaps they'll do it," replied Harvey; "only they may prefer white meat first, worse luck!"

"I don't know how the deuce to get out of this scrape," remarked Jack. "I shouldn't care so much for myself.

It's you and Monday I am in a funk about. If you could get away, Dick——"

"Leave thee, leave thee, lad;
I'll never leave thee,"

said Harvey, quoting the words of an old Scotch song.

"I know you're a brick, and you'll stand to your guns as long as anybody," said Jack. "But hang me if I can help being riled at this turn-up. It oughtn't to have happened."

Hunston was not far off, and hearing voices, he came up to the captives.

"No talking there," he said. "I don't permit it."

"You can't well stop it unless you gag us," answered Jack.

"Can't I? We'll see about that. What do you suppose you are going to do?"

"Grin and bear it," said Jack, with a laugh.

"That's what you'll have to do, until you're strung up," said Hunston.

"You said that before and yet you didn't do it."

Hunston gnashed his teeth with rage.

"Perhaps I shall have better luck next time," he said. "I've got you safe enough now."

"Didn't Palembang burn finely, and didn't I set your chiefs milling like steam?"

"Don't cheek me. If you do, you'll find yourself in the wrong box, I can tell you," said Hunston, angrily.

"You can tie my arms, but you can't stop my tongue, unless you've got a gag," said Jack.

"Can't I! What does that taste like?" was Hunston's answer.

He hit Harkaway in the face with all his might, and as Jack could not use his arms to steady himself, he fell backwards.

The blood streamed from his nose, and he was a good deal hurt.

"That's plucky," he said.

"Do you want another?" asked Hunston.

"You can pitch in as long as you like to be coward enough. I can't stop you," replied Jack. "But just untie my arms, and I'll give you toko for yam, my boy!"

"Get up."

"I shan't. You knocked me down, and you may pick me up, or ask some of your niggers to do it."

"Not likely," said Hunston. "If you don't get up, I'll kick you till you do. How would you like a toe in the ribs?"

He suited the action to the word, and Jack contrived in some way to get on his feet.

"All right, Mister Tuan Biza Hunston," he said. "I'll be one with you before long."

"You won't have the chance," said Hunston.

"You can't tell that. I've spared you once or twice, but the next time—if ever it does come—it will be a case of a tombstone, with something written on it."

"What?"

"Oh, something like this. 'Here lies Harry Hunston, the biggest blackguard who ever disgraced the name of Englishman.'"

"You dare to say this to me?" cried Hunston frantically.

"Why shouldn't I? Do you want to give me another nose-ender? Do it if you like; you are cock now, and I'm only a hen."

"Wait till you dance on nothing, and then you'll alter your tone."

"Think so?" said Jack, beginning to whistle "The Night before Larry was Stretched!"

Going up to Harvey, Hunston said—

"Walk on with me. I want to talk to you."

"All right," said Harvey.

They separated themselves from the other prisoners, and went on a little ahead.

"I've no particular ill feeling towards you," continued Hunston, in a slightly embarrassed manner, "though you were always a friend of Harkaway's."

"I'm not ashamed of it. Jack and I are like brothers," said Harvey.

"You won't be long, for Harkaway will be as dead as a door-nail before this time to-morrow."

"And I?"

"Your fate depends upon yourself. I am all-powerful with the Pisangs, though I do not think my influence would suffice to save Harkaway, even were I disposed to try."

"Why not?" asked Harvey.

"The chiefs are so ashamed of being humbugged by him last night, and they are enraged as well at the burning of Palembang. He set the place on fire, and there is scarcely a house left standing. All the people are camped out."

"Can't they be generous to an enemy?"

"They don't understand the word," replied Hunston, "but you I can save. They will be content with torturing and hanging Harkaway, and that black Limbian thief of a servant you've got."

"Monday?"

"I do not know what you call him."

"Oh! he's harmless enough. Show yourself a man for once, Hunston, and let us all go free. We will undertake not to molest you any more."

"Can't be done at the price, my boy. There is an old score between Harkaway and myself, which must be rubbed out this time, and I would not spare him if I could."

"If that is all you have to tell me, you might have saved me the pain of listening to it," said Harvey, in a tone of disgust.

"It is not all."

"Let me go back to Jack. I don't care about the society of a butcher."

"Who's a butcher?"

"You are; and an inhuman brute into the bargain. I will say it, if you kill me for it. You are not so good as a butcher by a long chalk."

"Take care," exclaimed Hunston, with a savage, vindictive glance in his snake-like eye. "I repeat that I don't wish to harm you. Listen to me. I feel rather lonely among the Pisangs, having no one to talk to, except Emily."

"And her father?"

"He is dead."

"How was that?"

"She swears I did it; but I didn't want the fool to kick the bucket. He insulted me, and I had him publicly flogged with bamboos, and I suppose his constitution couldn't stand it, though I only ordered him to receive two hundred strokes."

"Why, it's barbarous!" said Harvey.

"At all events," resumed Hunston, "it knocked old Scratchley off his perch, and Emily hates me like bricks for it. So you see I want a chum."

"You've got your Pisang chief," said Harvey.

"No good at all. I could cut a better chum out of a cocoanut than any of them would make. You be my friend, Harvey, and you shall not die."

"What!" replied Dick, with a feeling of loathing and horror; "I pal up with you?"

"Why not?"

"After what you've just told me—after your vindictive hatred to Jack—your flogging old Scratchley to death—and your determination to make the daughter marry the murderer of her father, whether she will or not?"

"You put it rather strongly," said Hunston, cowering beneath the withering look Harvey gave him.

"Not a bit too strong," answered Harvey.

"Do you consent?"

"Consent? I should think not, indeed I'd die a thousand deaths first. You won't catch me buying my life at such a price. I'd rather chum with a burglar. The most desperate convict is a greater gentleman than you."

"Die, then!" replied Hunston savagely, "you're a bigger fool than I took you to be."

"If I had my hands loose, I'd punch your ugly head for insulting me by such an offer," cried Harvey.

"Don't provoke me too far," said Hunston; "or I'll serve you as I did Scratchley."

Harvey turned round and walked away without giving him any answer.

Hunston was mad with rage.

Speaking in the native language, he cried—"Halt!"

Instantly the Pisangs stopped, and looked to their leader for orders.

"Two of you seize that fellow," Hunston went on; "strip him, and tie him to a palm-tree. Two more of you break off a couple of long bamboos, and give him twenty cuts as hard as you can lay them on. Twenty from each of you."

In an instant Harvey was seized, and tightly bound with thick rattans. His jacket and shirt stripped off, and his back laid bare.

"I'll teach you to cheek me, my hearty," said Hunston, smiling bitterly. "I'm king here, and you shall know it."

Harvey made no answer, feeling that it would be of no use to appeal to his tormentor.

There was nothing for it, as Jack had said, but to "grin and bear it."

Nevertheless, he gnashed his teeth angrily and waited with a sinking feeling at his heart for the first strokes of the supple bamboos.

He was not kept long in suspense.

"Whish! whish!" They came with a sound like a hiss through the yielding air, and his back felt as if some one was stripping off the skin with a sharp knife.

CHAPTER VI.

MONDAY'S DODGE.

If Hunston expected to have the triumph of hearing his victim howl and cry for mercy, he was disappointed.

He bore the infliction bravely.

At times low wailing moans escaped him, which were wrung from him by the severity of the pain.

But that was all; and when they cast him loose, after giving him the last cut, he trembled violently, while they dressed him again, and then rejoined Jack, who, powerless to help him, had looked on with frantic rage.

"Did I bear it well?" asked Harvey in a whisper.

"Like a trump. Never mind, Dick, I hope it's only lent. We'll pay him back again before long. What was it for?"

"He offered me my life if I'd be his friend, and I told him to go to Jericho," answered Harvey.

"Did he say anything about me?"

"Yes. You're a gone coon. Your case is past praying for; but now we're both tarred with the same brush, and I suppose the cowardly brute will have it all his own way."

"Perhaps Mole and the Limbians will come soon."

"They will come," replied Harvey, "of that I'm certain; but the mischief is, they may come too late. How my back burns!"

"I should think so. I'll ask Hunston if his fellows have got any oil," said Jack who added aloud—"Hunston!"

"What is it?" was the reply.

"May your men rub some oil on Harvey's back!"

"Not a drop."

"You are torturing him," said Jack, whose face flushed angrily.

"Just what I want to do. You don't suppose I had him flogged for nothing, do you? And you'd best shut up, or I'll give you a dose of it. Tell him he'll be out of his misery to-morrow," answered Hunston with a laugh.

Jack was about to make some reply, when Harvey touched his sleeve.

"Don't," he said, "it's no use. You might as well talk to a stone wall; and I shouldn't like you to cop it as well as me."

Much against his will, Harkaway remained silent.

"You're right. We must bide our time; though I should like to have five minutes' play with my fists with him in the open. He might tie one hand behind me if he liked, and then I'd back myself to lick him."

"He's a nice pup; but we'll make him yelp before we've done with him," replied Harvey, smarting with pain.

In a short time a halt was ordered, and a guard being established, the Pisangs threw themselves down to rest.

The heat of the sun had been great, which made the march very fatiguing.

Glad to follow their example, the captives sank on the hard ground.

Presently Monday looked round him; all was still.

"You sleep, Mast' Jack?" he whispered.

"No," replied Harkaway, "for my mind is so full of disagreeable thoughts that I'm not likely to be."

"Lie still. Monday use um teeth."

"What for?"

"Cut in two the rattans; then Mast' Jack make a dive for the woods, and get off," continued Monday.

"It's not a bad dodge, but I'd rather you did it for Harvey. I can take care of myself; something always turns up for me," answered Jack.

"Very well," replied Monday.

He rolled over a little, and got nearer to Harvey, to

whom he communicated his plan, and soon his teeth were at work.

In ten minutes Harvey was free.

"Run, Dick, for your life," whispered Jack; "and go zigzag, so that they won't be able to hit you if they fire. There is only Hunston who knows how to use a gun, and the lazy beggar is snoring."

"Aren't you coming too?" asked Harvey.

"No. Monday and I will stop. We can't all hope to get away."

"I can't leave you."

"But you must. Think how much you can do for me. There are arms in the boat, and you can come and rescue me. Whether you are successful or not, you must try to get away. I got you into this mess by asking you to stop to help me to carry off Emily from Hunston. Poor Emily!"

Jack sighed.

"If anything should go wrong with me, Dick," he continued, "promise me you'll be a brother to Emily. She mustn't marry Hunston."

"She shan't if I can help it."

"I may be a croaker by this time to-morrow; there's no telling."

"Well, I'll go, in the hope of being of use to you," said Harvey. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, old flick," replied Jack, trying to be jocular once more.

"God bless you!" said Harvey.

The next minute he was crawling on his stomach towards a dense jungle.

He had reached it, and was just about to plunge into it, when a Pisang saw him.

Uttering a fierce yell, he discharged the gun Hunston had given him.

So bad was his aim, that, instead of hitting Harvey, he shot a comrade who stood near him

The native fell to the ground with a groan.

Hunston sprang up.

"You blundering fool!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter?"

The Pisang explained that one of the white chiefs had escaped.

"Which one?" cried Hunston.

He ran to the spot where he had left the prisoners.

Jack and Monday pretended to be fast asleep.

Kicking them in the ribs he exclaimed, "Get up. Where's Harvey?"

"You needn't kick a fellow like that, in the middle of his first sleep," replied Jack, in a tone of remonstrance. "It's very hard a man can't have a nap for a few minutes."

He rubbed his eyes and yawned drowsily.

"Where's Harvey?" thundered Hunston.

"How should I know? Don't I tell you I've been nodding?" replied Jack.

Turning to the Pisangs Hunston said—"After him! I'll have all your lives, if you don't catch him."

By this time, however, the fugitive had got a good start, and, though the Pisangs ran hither and thither, they could not find him.

Hunston foamed at the mouth with rage.

"Now, that's what I call a shabby trick," remarked Jack. "He didn't appreciate your kindness at all. You were going to hang him to-morrow, and he's stepped it. Dick ought to be ashamed of himself!"

Jack's broad grin irritated Hunston.

"What do you want to work me up for?" he exclaimed. "I'll treat you as I did him, and make a cat scratch your back."

"Don't get wild. Dick's a very good fellow, but he shouldn't have taken his hook without saying he was going," replied Jack.

Hunston turned away, and himself assisted in the pursuit of Harvey.

It was fruitless, however.

He had got safely away.

Then the order to resume the march was given, and leaving the body of the dead Pisang, they continued their way to the town of Palembang, or, more strictly, what remained of it.

Hunston was more sullen than ever; but he comforted himself with the reflection that Jack and Monday were still in his power.

They reached the smoking ruins of the town about nightfall, weary and foot-sore.

The people had made themselves rude shelters of boughs and grass.

Loud were the lamentations over their burnt property, and their household utensils, for only a few had saved even the necessary implements of domestic use.

The fire occurring in the night time, had taken all by surprise.

Owing to the high wind prevailing, its progress had been very rapid.

Jack and Monday were placed in one of the few houses, which, owing to their isolated position, the flames had not reached.

The door was shut, and they were left to brood over their coming fate.

"Well, Mast' Jack," said Monday, "how um like it now?"

"Oh, tol lol; I'm pretty bobbish," replied Jack. "I think if I was going to be hanged in five minutes, I should sing my prayers instead of saying them."

"It what you call possum up um gum tree now, sare."

"And a very tall gum tree, too," said Jack.

"P'raps Mist' Mole come in night and walk into um Pisang."

"No such luck, I'm afraid."

There was a great noise outside, and looking through a crack in the wall, Jack saw the Pisang warriors beating back the crowd.

They had heard that Jack was the cause of the destruction of their city, and they wanted to get at him and tear him in pieces.

But Hunston reserved him for public execution, and the wild untamed mob was driven back.

"Want to lynch us," remarked Jack. "Amiable beings, these Pisangs. I wish my hands were not tied."

"Suppose Monday try um teeth, sare; and then you untie Monday when you free!"

"Stunning," said Jack. "Cut along, old chocolate and cream. You've got some sense in your noddle."

Monday set to work, as he had done in Harvey's case, resembling the mouse which liberated the lion, by gnawing the meshes of the net in which he was caught.

"Bravo!" cried Jack, springing up in a short time, and stretching himself.

"That all right, sare?" asked Monday.

"Ripping! I don't know if my grinders are so sharp as yours; but I'll have a go in."

By dint of biting and pulling, he contrived to liberate Monday.

"Now um fight, before they take us to die," said the black proudly.

Just then there was a crash, and something fell through the frail roof.

"Hallo!" said Jack, "who's chucking bricks?"

"What that, sare?" asked Monday.

"I don't know. It's so beastly dark I can't see; but it looks to me as if one of somebody's teeth had dropped out."

"Oh! Mast' Jack, how you make um poor Monday laugh! Why him do it, when there so much misery?" said Monday chuckling.

"That's the time to laugh, ugly mug," answered Jack, groping about in the dark.

Presently he stumbled upon a heavy stone.

"Lucky," he said, "that this litle pebble didn't light on my nut. I know which is the hardest."

"Ah! de debble!" cried Monday, in a voice of pain.

"What's up now?" said Jack,

"Musquito bite him on the nose," answered Monday ruefully. "How um sting!"

"Squash him, then," cried Jack. "I thought I heard one of the beggars buzzing about. I say, Monday, this stone didn't come here by accident."

"How him know that, sare?"

"Because I can feel a bit of paper tied to it."

"Paper?"

"Yes; and I shouldn't wonder if there was something written on it. Blow the darkness! It's no good asking you if you've got a match in your pocket, as one could in a civilised country; and as we're not cats, we can't see in the dark," said Jack.

"The moon him shine through that crack, sare."

"By Jove! That will do. There are more ways of killing a dog than hanging him, Monday," Jack said, in great glee.

He knelt down near the crack, and saw that the bit of paper, a very small one, had been written on with a pencil.

The writing was that of a woman.

"Emily for a hundred!" he muttered.

With some difficulty he contrived to read:

"'Dearest Jack——"

"Dearest!" he said. "I like that."

Then he went on:

"'I took a walk near the coast to-day, and saw a quantity of boats lying off near the shore, hidden partly by the rock. They must be your friends the Limbians.

"'Keep up your spirits. I was deeply grieved to hear you were recaptured; but I expect a night attack will be made, and if so, rest assured I will open the door of your prison before they can come and kill you.

"'Ever your own loving

"'EMILY.'"

"She's a brick!" said Jack, in great exultation.

"What that, sare?" asked Monday who was all curiosity.

"A friend has sent this letter attached to a stone. The Limbians are off the island."

"My people. That jolly! Then they not hang um after all," said Monday, joyfully.

"I never thought they would, though it looked uncommonly black an hour ago. Hurrah, Monday! You weren't born to be hanged, you scoundrel!" said Jack.

"Mist' Mole come and fight like um tiger, sare. Monday like to see Mole fighting."

"I think Mole will be like the Yankee, who said to his men, 'Fight till all your powder is gone, and then run away;' and as I'm rather lame, I'll start now, before the enemy comes up," said Jack laughing.

"Ha! ha! him brave man," exclaimed Monday, also laughing.

"Hunston will be sold this time."

The door suddenly opened, and a voice said, "Will he?"

It was Hunston.

"You're rather too fast, Harkaway; and you shouldn't talk so loud," he exclaimed. "These walls are not very thick, and you didn't think I was listening."

A diabolical smile played round the corners of Hunston's mouth in the moonlight.

Jack's heart fell within him; and Monday would have turned pale if his skin had permitted him.

Here was adisastrous interruption to their plan.

Their hopes were crushed in the bud.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

"So," continued Hunston, "the Limbian fleet is off our shore?"

"That can't be very pleasing intelligence to you," replied Jack, who began to recover himself.

"We have a traitor in the camp, it appears, and it is lucky for her she is a woman whom I love, or she should share your fate."

"Emily, you mean?"

"Yes; your correspondent. It was a clever idea to write you a letter, and fasten it to a stone. But you forget the old saying that 'walls have ears.' "

"I forgot that you were such a cad you wouldn't mind listening," answered Jack.

"You'll forget more than that soon, for I mean to order you out for instant execution—instant death, you and your black friend here, do you understand that?"

"I've one comfort," replied Jack, "and that is, I'm not afraid to die. Don't you wish you could say the same thing?"

"Never mind. I meant to have had you tortured, but there isn't time for that. It will be torture enough to know that Emily is in my power."

Jackf retted inwardly,but outwardly he remained calm.

"Heaven will protect her," he said.

"Will it?" answered Hunston. "Why doesn't Heaven interfere for you?"

"Perhaps it may. I'm not dead yet; and while I have life there is hope, you know, old boy," Jack said cheerily.

"Not much hope for you. I could pistol you where you stand. I don't know why I shouldn't do it, and make sure of you. I wouldn't lose you for ten years of my life. Perhaps you are reckoning on your friends?"

Jack made no answer.

He had a faint hope that Mr. Mole might come up in time to save him.

Hunston saw this gleam of hope in his eyes.

"If they were at this door now, I'd shoot you through the head." he said.

"You're quite capable of it," was Jack's cool answer.

Suddenly there arose a great shouting outside.

Jack's heart leaped in his bosom.

Shots were fired, and then he knew that the Limbians had arrived.

A loud, clear voice was heard exclaiming—

"Fire away, my lads. No quarter. Give it them hot and strong."

Hunston turned pale.

He saw his prey escaping from his murderous clutches, just when it was within his grasp.

"Harvey's voice, by jingo!" cried Jack. "I must have a cut in."

He dashed his fist in Hunston's face, just being able to see him in the moonlight that streamed in through the open door.

Hunston stepped back, and the blow grazed his temple.

"Curse you," he cried; "I'll have one life at least."

Raising his pistol—the one he had taken from Harvey, he fired it point-blank at Jack.

Our hero's days were nearly numbered.

Monday, however, saw the action, and quick as thought, jerked Hunston's arm so that the ball went through the roof, and the pistol fell from his hand.

"Touch and go," said Jack calmly.

Hunston turned and dashed through the open door, seeing that all was lost.

"After him, Monday," said Jack; "he's gone to Emily. Now's our time; we must save her."

But Hunston was too quick for him.

The ground outside was filled with frightened Pisangs.

They lost sight of him in the crowd, which was panic-stricken.

The night attack had taken them all by surprise, and they were ill able to cope with their well-armed assailants.

A dropping musketry fire continued at intervals, and Pisangs fell on every side.

At last they began to run.

Men, women, and children, helter-skelter, sought the shelter of the woods.

Monday and Jack stood a chance of being shot by their own friends, and got separated in the confusion.

Dreadful cries arose on all sides.

It was not a defeat simply.

It was more than a rout for it became a massacre.

Jack ran he knew not whither, seeking for Emily and found her not.

No one took any notice of him, for all were intent upon securing their own safety.

At length Monday rested under a tree upon the outskirts of what had once been the thriving town of Palembang.

The moon, which had been partially hidden by drifting clouds, now shone out brilliantly.

He heard groans, and was at a loss to know where the sounds came from.

Looking up, he saw a man perched on one of the lower branches of a tree.

"You come down out of that," exclaimed Monday, in his own language.

"Ah! my good Pisang," replied the trembling voice of Mr. Mole; "I mean you no harm. I was forced to take part in this expedition, much against my will."

Monday laughed quietly to himself, and determined to have some fun.

"I am a Pisang chief," he said; "and I want the head of the Tuan Biza of the pale-faces."

"What a bother, I left my gun on the ground," Mr. Mole muttered. "That infernal arrow frightened me so when it grazed the calf of my leg, as I was leading the brave fellows to the battle, that I sought the friendly shelter of the first tree in a scamper."

"Will the white chief come down," continued Monday; "or must the Pisang warrior shoot him like a bird?"

"Don't shoot, my good Pisang; for Heaven's sake don't shoot!" said Mr. Mole in a terrified tone.

"Come down, then."

"I would gladly do so, if I could, but I fear I cannot. How on earth I contrived to get up here is a mystery to me."

"The white chief is a coward, and he must die," said Monday. "All the Limbians are conquered, and our young men are crying loudly for heads."

"What a fool I was to come here," said Mr. Mole to himself. "I wish I'd stayed with Ambonia and Alfura. This is out of the frying-pan into the fire. Dear me! I think I should have remained with the boats, if that impetuous boy Harvey had not suddenly joined us, and insisted upon my marching with him."

Taking up a stone, Monday threw it near Mr. Mole, causing a rustling in the leaves and a sharp hiss through the air.

"Is that an arrow?" cried Mr. Mole, in abject terror. "I say, you Pisang fellow, don't do that. I'll come down, at least I'll try. Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! why did my uncle die and leave me a tea-garden in China."

"Make haste! the Pisang wants the white chief's head."

"Won't anything else content you?" replied Mr. Mole. "My head isn't worth much, and I'm getting dreadfully bald. Oh! why did I leave England? Deuce take these beastly boughs; I can't get down."

Monday threw up another stone, and hit Mr. Mole on the leg.

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Mole; "I knew he'd do it. I'm wounded. Oh! my poor shin. The arrow's gone right through my leg. I can feel the pain up to my knee already."

In his fright he let go his hold, and tumbled rather ungracefully to the ground.

The distance was not great, so that the fall only shook him a little; but he lay quite still.

"I'll sham dead," he thought; "and then the bloodthirsty savage may let me alone."

Monday grinned, and altering his voice, as he spoke English, said—

"Mist' Mole not know um poor Monday."

The effect was magical upon Mr. Mole when he heard this speech.

He opened his eyes, took a look at the well-known features which he had been too much alarmed to notice closely before and sprang up.

His former terror vanished, and with his countenance radiant with delight, he said—

"You rascally black thief, if I wasn't so pleased, I do think I should be tempted to kick you!"

"Take care, sare. Pisang have um head."

"You mustn't play those tricks with me. However, I forgive you. Yes, out of the generous emotions of my heart, which bubble up from—from—confound it, I can't collect my ideas!"

"You have snug place up there, sare," said Monday, pointing to the tree.

"Ah! I crept up there to rest. See how I have been fighting. Seventeen Pisangs fell by my hand alone."

Monday looked as if he didn't believe him.

"You and I have always been good friends, Monday," said Mr. Mole; "and you must promise me one thing. That is, not to say anything about finding me up that tree."

"Not tell Mast' Jack, sare; not tell Mast' Harvey?"

"Precisely. They have an unfortunate habit of making fun of people, which they call chaffing. I detest and abominate the practice; and what I want to impress upon your uncultivated mind is that my courage is up to the average, I may say beyond it."

"Monday keep um secret."

"That's right. Mum's the word and you and I will be fast friends. I still hear the sound of firing, and the shrieks of the dying. Is it safe to venture far away?"

"Monday have a lark with you, sare," replied the black. "Fighting nearly all over. Pisangs all beat; they fly' way or dead."

"And Harkaway? I trust he is safe, and will thank me for the generous effort I have made to effect his liberation."

"Not know exactly, sare," replied Monday. "Mast' Jack him gone somewhere after Missy Em'ly."

"Ah! I have heard that he is much attached in that quarter. There's my gun; take it up, and mind, it is loaded. Walk in front; you shall have the post of honour. I will follow close behind you," exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"We go and find Mast' Jack, eh, sare?" replied Monday.

"We will endeavour to do so. I long to shake him by the hand, and receive his thanks; for I assure you, Monday, that I have risen in my own estimation by the pro-

digies of valour I have performed during this night's work; twenty-seven Pisangs did I kill."

"You say seventeen just now, sare?"

"Nonsense. I am like an old war-horse," cried Mr. Mole, after applying himself to the contents of a pocket-flask; "I smell the battle afar off."

"You great fighting man, sare."

"Rather, my young friend. I don't know how I did it, but my spirit carries me on. Seven and thirty Pisangs did I slay with my own hand."

"That ten more," muttered Monday.

"I laid about me with an old ship's cutlass, and the warriors fell before my prowess like leaves in autumn. Forty-seven Pisangs dead by my——"

Monday burst out laughing; he could not stand Mr. Mole's exaggeration any longer.

"Irreverent negro; I'll talk no more to you. When I again recount my exploits, you may tell me of it," exclaimed Mr. Mole, in high dudgeon.

"Come on, sare. This way. Quick march!" cried Monday, with military precision.

They walked cautiously towards the town, near which the sounds of the battle were dying away, though in the distance there was a noise as of furious pursuit.

The Limbian warriors were exacting a terrible account from their old enemies the Pisangs.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF THE KING.

THE morning broke serene and cloudless, as it almost always did in those regions.

On the part of the Limbians, the loss was slight, for their guns had given them a great advantage over the surprised and terror-stricken enemy.

Harkaway had joined the pursuing party, but he could not contrive to find any trace of Hunston.

Nor was he more fortunate with regard to Emily.

Both of them had disappeared as completely as if the ground had opened and swallowed them up.

In the morning he returned, jaded and weary, to find Harvey, Mr. Mole, and Monday, preparing breakfast, by means of a fire they had kindled.

The Limbians were assembled in little parties, and all did their own foraging.

Great was the rejoicing of the friends at being together safe and sound.

"I owe my life," said Jack; "to you, Dick, and our faithful Monday."

"And me," continued Mr. Mole. "May I not claim some share in the good work?"

"Of course," answered Jack; "we haven't forgotten you, sir; and you shall have a medal or a statue, whichever takes your fancy most."

"I think I should prefer a medal," replied Mr. Mole, after a moment's reflection.

"What shall we put on it, sir?" asked Harvey.

"Let me see. Two natives fighting, and trying, to kill a white man—myself——"

"Up a tree, sare?" put in Monday, with a grin.

Mr. Mole gave him a warning look.

"Behind one, if you like, firing at them, and underneath the words, 'In token of bravery and devotion;' while, on the reverse, you may put my portrait, and write, 'Isaac Mole, a tried friend, and a fierce soldier.'"

"It shall be done, sir," replied Jack, who could scarcely refrain from laughing at Mr. Mole's vanity.

Taking Harvey on one side, Jack informed him of his vain search for Emily.

"I too have looked for her," replied Harvey. "You know when I left you, I ran to the coast, and found the Limbians under Mole and the king landing?"

"Yes."

"They were delighted to see me, and I hurried their movements, because you were in danger. When we reached Palembang, I did all I could to discover you and Emily," continued Harvey.

"Hunston's got a hiding-place somewhere," said Jack thoughtfully.

"We'll unearth the fox."

"I fully intend to do so, but the task will be difficult. These islands abound with rocks, mountains, and caverns, to which the natives have taken themselves."

"So Monday's been telling me," replied Harvey.

"I mean to stop here, Dick, till I've found her," continued Jack.

"You won't get the Limbians to stay, I'm thinking.

"Never mind them. They've done their work, and they've beaten the enemy. So it is only natural that they should want to get back to their homes, and celebrate their rites and customs."

"I told them we'd have no head-hunting or eating captives," said Harvey.

"What did they say?"

"The king did not like it; but he gave orders that no prisoners were to be taken, so that has made the battle more bloody."

"I expect there are an awful lot of the poor Pisang beggars killed?"

"Awful! Over a hundred, I expect," replied Harvey.

"They won't get over this wollopping in a hurry," Jack said. "And now I'll tell you what we'll do. The Limbians may go home."

"Yes."

"We'll go and look out for a cave near the coast, so as to have an open front to prevent a surprise, if the disorganised band of Pisangs should try to have another go-in."

"And you and I, with Mole and Monday, form the garrison. I see," replied Harvey.

"Exactly. That's the ticket to a T," Jack answered.

"I've got stores in my boat; and Mole brought over a lot of grub, and powder, and things," continued Harvey.

"We shan't hurt. And now let's have some breakfast."

Mr. Mole's voice was heard exclaiming—

"Now, then, Harkaway, and you, Harvey, come and join me in a cup of tea. Who says bacon, and who'll have parrot?"

"I'll leave the cockatoo to you, sir, and go in for a slice of pig," replied Jack.

Monday handed some tea to his young masters, but in doing so stumbled, and let the calabash fall.

"Hold up!" cried Jack. "You're as awkward as a Newfun'land pup; not half so clever, and twice as ugly."

Monday apologised, and the breakfast proceeded.

Presently an old chief name Madura came up, and beckoned to Jack, who went out to meet him.

"Anything happened?" asked Jack in the native language.

"Bad news for Matabella," replied Madura.

"Indeed!"

"During the battle, King Lanindyer received a wound, from which he has just died."

"Monday's father dead?" cried Jack. "By Jove, I'm sorry for that."

The old chief had wished to break the news gently to Monday, but Jack's loud exclamation reached his ears, he instantly stopped eating, and ran away to the camp.

Madura and Jack followed him.

They found him kneeling by the side of the dead body, which he kissed repeatedly, uttering wild lamentations the while.

The king had fallen fighting bravely, pierced through the heart by an arrow.

All the Limbians were profoundly grieved, and they talked together in whispers.

The ruined city was close by.

Great numbers of dead bodies lay on all sides, as yet unburied.

The distant mountains, in which the defeated Pisangs had taken refuge, were lying like a blue cloud on the western horizon.

A dizzy light played over the surface of the land.

The sun looked like a shield of red-hot iron, and the hot earth scorched the feet.

Madura took Monday by the arm, and led him away, saying—

"You are called to the throne of your fathers; but though your destiny is high, remember that he who gazeth on the sky may stumble on the earth."

"Oh! my father!" replied Monday. "Why are you taken away from me?"

"Recollect," said Jack, "that you have plenty of friends, and you are now king."

"No, no!" cried Monday, "I will not be the Tuan Biza of my people. I will remain with you. Do not send me away. Monday will die if he be not with you."

Touched by the poor fellow's devotion, which was expressed by a piteous look, Jack replied—

"I like to have you with me; but who is to reign over Limbi?"

"My uncle Selim. O Madura, make Selim your king. He is a great chief. Let him reign."

"He who can neither save himself nor hunt his enemies?" replied Madura. "What is he but a broken spear, and a blunted sword?"

"Never mind," said Monday. "The man who has health, strength, and courage, has three parts that will not turn white in the fire."

"Stay with your people and rule over them, O Matabella!" said Madura sternly. "What are the white men, that they should rob us of our king?" Has it not been said that the unpurposed man makes his meal of the clouds?"

"I will not leave my friends, the white men," answered Monday determinedly. "Call upon Selim, O Madura, he will make a wise and good king."

"Young man," replied Madura, angry at being baffled, "for six things is a fool known—Wrath without cause, change without reason, inquiries without object, putting trust in strangers, and wanting the power to know a friend from a foe; and let me add, that long experience maketh large wit."

"I'm very sorry for you, Monday," said Jack; "very much so indeed. It is a great blow, and I thank you for wishing to stay with us. Think the matter over. Listen to this old swell."

"Monday go with you, Mast' Jack. Go anywhere—to end of the world."

"Don't be in a hurry to decide. I'll leave you to fight it out with your chief; and if you want my advice, give me a hail."

He walked away, and Harvey, with Mr. Mole, asked him what had happened.

"Monday's governor has burst up," exclaimed Jack.

"Done what?" said Mr. Mole, looking puzzled.

"Bust up. Croaked. Got knocked on the head in the scrimmage last night."

"'Bust' is not English, at least not grammatical English," said Mr. Mole, "and I did not understand you;

though now I take your meaning. Is the young savage much affected?"

"Frightfully cut up," said Jack.

"Dear me! It is a bad job; but one savage the less is no loss to civilization. Finish your breakfast."

"I can't eat," said Jack. "I haven't had a wink all night. I'm more tired than an elephant at noon. So if one of you will kindly fan away the beastly flies, I'll seek the arms of—of—— Who was that ancient swell whom they called the god of sleep?"

"I was never the cheese at classics," answered Harvey.

"You mean Morpheus," said Mr. Mole, "who, with Somnus——"

"Thank you, sir. Won't it keep till I wake up?" said Jack. "I know it was Morpheus, or one of the family."

Jack found a retired spot, and was soon asleep.

Harvey followed his example, and Mr. Mole, applying himself to his flask said—

"What a wrong-headed creature is a boy. They waste their opportunities when young, and as they grow up they have neither time or inclination to learn."

CHAPTER IX.

BEN BLUNT THE BO'SUN.

MONDAY'S uncle Selim was very glad of the chance of becoming king of Limbi.

Being a wise and good chief, he was not unacceptable to, or unpopular with, the leaders of the little nation.

Still Madura was not willing that Monday should lose his right of succeeding to the throne.

A council was held.

It was decided that Monday should be able to assume the kingship whenever he liked, and that Selim should only reign in his absence.

"Oh, my son," said Madura, "never give up that which is within your grasp. The pearls in their beds are as thick as stars, but wishing never brought up one of them from the bottom of the sea!"

"Selim will make a better king than I should," replied

Monday. "Matabella is young, but Selim has the wisdom of age."

"The wise men have said," answered Madura, "that the deer is swift on the plains, but a child leads him in the streets. You are young, and you must learn, and I would teach you, for the proverb is true which says—'The lamp may be made of diamonds, but it dies without oil.'"

Monday was glad when it was all settled, and Selim made king.

He could go away then, and mourn over his dead father, whom he loved dearly.

Selim at once assumed the position which the unanimous vote of the council gave him.

He decided that the Limbians should return immediately in their boats, and bury the late king with all the pomp usual on such occasions.

Monday said he would not leave his father's body till it was in the grave.

Therefore he returned with his followers.

"Good-bye, Monday," said Jack, when he heard what had been arranged. "I hope we shall see you again soon; but don't stand in your own light."

"Monday live and die with you, Mast' Jack," he replied. "If you live in Limbi with me, then I be king; if you go I go."

"Then we shall see you soon after the funeral?"

"I come back in boat."

"All right. I won't say how grieved I am at your heavy loss, Monday. You know what I feel," cried Jack.

He squeezed Monday's hand as he spoke, and the black returned the affectionate pressure.

"Give us your fist, Mon.," cried Harvey; "and here's fortune to you in a cup of cold tea—that is to say, half a cocoanutful."

Mr. Mole sidled up to Monday as he was going away.

"Monday, will you do me a favour?" he said.

"What that, Mist' Mole?" asked Monday.

"Tell my wives, I'm dead, will you?"

"Dead!"

"Killed in battle. Dead and buried."

In spite of his engrossing sorrow, Monday could not help grinning faintly.

I. H. "'NO, I'M NOT WRECKED,' REPLIED BEN BLUNT." Page 50 Vol. III.

"What! Tell um lie, sare? No; Monday never tell um lie," he answered.

"It won't hurt either Ambonia or Alfura; they'll marry again. Think of it, my good friend," urged Mr. Mole.

"No, sare! Monday have him conscience, and he not let him tell um lie," replied the black.

"Deuce take the beast," said Mr. Mole, as Monday walked away. "I suppose I shall have those beauties coming over here to take me home in a boat. A nice look-out that would be. Heigho!"

"What's that, sir?" asked Harvey, who had overheard the conversation.

"Oblige me by minding your own business, Harvey," said Mr. Mole.

"Didn't I hear you mention the names of Alfura and Ambonia, sir?"

"If I did, what then?"

"Nothing, sir. I thought you'd fret. What is it Moore says—

> "I never loved a sweet gazelle,
> To glad me with its sweet blue eye,
> Than when it grew to be a swell,
> It always used to fight me shy;

and married a market-gardener——."

"How shamefully you misquote," cried Mr. Mole indignantly. "Moore is my favourite author, and you murder him."

"Very sorry, I'm sure, sir."

Jack called Harvey away to take a walk with him in the country.

They were well armed, and intended to look for a cave where they could locate themselves while they remained on the island.

They went to the sea-shore, and soon found what they wanted.

All their stores were removed into this harbor of refuge, and they returned for Mr. Mole.

"The Limbians have gone, my dear Harkaway," cried Mr. Mole; "and you have left me alone here at the mercy of the enemy, as I may say."

"You've got your gun, sir. Besides your reputation is so great, that no one would think of attacking you," replied Jack.

"Is it, indeed? Do you think that those benighted savages have heard of me?"

"I'm sure of it."

"What are we going to do?" continued Mr. Mole.

"Dwell in a cave, sir. Harvey and I have pitched upon a stunning place. Nice and dry—no snakes; not too big; close to the sea—and we have put our stores out of the boat there."

"This is foolhardy, Harkaway," said Mr. Mole gravely. "But you shall not say I deserted you. I will cast in my lot with you."

"What's wrong now, sir?"

"You are stopping here to rescue a chit of a girl, who would make Hunston as good a wife as she would you."

Jack ground his teeth.

"Don't excite me, sir," he said.

"Bless me! How like a Pisang you look," cried Mr. Mole. "I didn't know you were so deeply smitten."

"Jack's very hard hit, sir," said Harvey. "You don't know how spoony he is."

"I wish he had enjoyed my brief experience of matrimony, that's all," replied Mr. Mole.

"Emily is not Ambonia or Alfura either," put in Jack. "And letting temper alone—though I'm sure she's the sweetest-tempered darling in the world—wouldn't it be cowardly to leave her in that scoundrel Hunston's power, as long as we can lift a finger to get her out of it?"

"So it would, Harkaway," answered Mr. Mole. "You appeal to my feelings as an Englishman there. I feel them gushing and bubbling up from the fountain of my heart. You have touched a mine of sentiment in my breast, and you shall have my support."

"Thank you for nothing," said Jack who was getting angry.

Mr. Mole thought it prudent not to hear this remark.

The guns were presently shouldered, and they marched to their new home.

When they reached it, they found it very comfortable.

Leaves and grass made good beds, and they had such provisions as they stood in need of.

A watch was set, it being arranged that two should sleep while one watched.

Harvey and Mr. Mole entered the cavern, while Jack,

who was almost always foremost when there was anything to be done, remained outside.

An oil lamp, such as we have previously described, was lighted.

Mr. Mole had his cocoanut shell and his whisky bottle.

He ate some dry bread, made of roughly-beaten unleavened maize flour, and began to imbibe.

"Now," said he, "this is what I call jolly. A sensible man ought to live in the present hour. What is ambition to me? I am happy now. Why should I disquiet myself about the future?"

"I wish you wouldn't disquiet me, sir. I want to go to sleep," said Harvey.

"Laziness—sheer laziness," answered Mr. Mole. "I had some hope of you boys at Pomona House, but—— This whisky is not bad; it has a grateful flavour."

Harvey closed his eyes, and let Mr. Mole have all the talking to himself. He was ill and feverish.

The punishment Hunston had subjected him to, and the following excitement of attacking the Pisangs, had fatigued him dreadfully.

Mr. Mole filled his half-cocoanut again, and emptied it.

"If I crook my elbow a little too much," he murmured, 'it is excusable under the circumstances. I have no respectability here to keep up, and I want to forget. I will seek oblivion in the flowing bowl. Let the landlord fill the bowl, until it does run over; for to-night I mean to be merry, and to-morrow I hope I shan't have a headache."

While Mr. Mole was amusing himself in his own peculiar fashion inside the cave, Jack was keeping a sharp lookout.

It was within an hour of sunset—a time when the dying away of nature in the tropics—if one may use the phrase—is most apt to attack and lull the senses.

His eyes almost closed.

He leaned against the entrance to the cave, and felt dreamy.

Suddenly a loud voice exclaimed—

"What cheer, my hearty?"

Jack started as if he had been shot.

A British voice!

A British sailor's voice in that lone island!

That such a thing could happen, at such a time, in such a place, he scarcely thought possible.

"Who goes there?" he cried.

"Who goes there?" repeated the voice. "Why, who do you suppose but Ben Blunt the bo'sun?"

Jack looked up and saw a stranger before him.

But as he was unarmed apparently, he did not feel alarmed.

The stranger was dressed like a sailor, and had a bluff, hearty, good-natured face.

"Was he friend or foe?"

That was the question.

CHAPTER X.

THE MUTINEERS.

THE new-comer was unarmed, and did not seem to be in the least dangerous.

But Jack proceeded to act cautiously.

Raising his gun he said—

"Don't come any nearer, until you have given an account of yourself."

"Right you are, cap'n," replied Ben Blunt. "I'm no sea-lawyer, and shan't spin you any yarns."

"What's your ship?"

"Haven't got one, though this time yesterday I was first mate of as good a ship as ever sailed the sea."

"I thought you said just now you were a boatswain?" exclaimed Jack, suspiciously.

"Look 'ee here, my hearty, that's right enough. You see I was bo'sun on board the 'Rattlesnake' when I was in the R. N; but I've left the navy and gone into the merchant service. I'm mate. Forge ahead. What are your next soundings?"

"Why have you left your vessel? Wrecked, eh?"

"No, I'm not wrecked either. It's this way," replied Ben Blunt, hitching up his trousers, and rolling his quid over in his mouth; "I shipped aboard the 'Sea-horse' from London to Shanghai, and we were on the return voyage, when Sam Parsons—may the old un keelhaul him!—turned mutineer."

"A mutiny, eh?" exclaimed Jack, beginning to understand.

"May I never eat salt junk again, if I'm telling you a word of a lie, cap'n!"

"Go on!"

Jack was much interested in the recital.

"Well, you see, sir, they killed the skipper and all the officers, bar me. I was a bit of a favourite with the lads, you see, and they didn't make me go to Davy Jones. But when that mutinous dog, Sam Parsons, who's what we should call in the navy an A. B., asked me to join 'em, 'No,' says I; 'I'll see you jolly well hanged first, my hearty, and then I won't.'"

"Case of 'not to-day, baker,'" remarked Jack, smiling.

"It was so, sir. 'Not to-day, baker; call to-morrow with a crusty cottage,'" answered Ben Blunt.

"You were quite right," said Jack; "and your experience of discipline in the navy did you good service."

"Well, look'ee here, cap'n," continued Ben. "I'm Blunt by name and blunt by nature. You may douse my daylights, but I'll stand true to my flag. So they talked among themselves, and then they shoved me into a boat and landed me on this here island."

"How long ago?"

"A matter of maybe two or three hours, and I've been boxing the compass, as ye may say, and taking an observation as to how to steer my course."

"The mutineers are in command of the ship, I suppose?" said Jack.

"Devil a doubt about that, cap'n! They've got her, and a beauty she is. Look! there she rides at anchor round that point."

Jack looked in the direction indicated, and saw a vessel, dimly visible, of about eight hundred tons register.

This was the "Sea-horse."

"I didn't think to meet an European, let alone a countryman on this outlandish bit o' ground," said Ben. "And now, sir, you've overhauled me, are my papers correct?"

"Quite. I'm satisfied, Ben, and I feel as if I'd known you for a score of years already," answered Jack.

His confidence was fully established in the man, who spoke with a genuineness that carried conviction with it.

"Thank you kindly, sir; and now, if so be as I may ask, how did you come to drop anchor in these parts?"

Jack told him how he had been wrecked with his friends; how the Pisangs had been defeated; and how he was stopping to rescue a beautiful young lady, a captive in the hands of Hunston, formerly a friend, and now an enemy.

"This Hunston's gone mutinous," remarked Ben Blunt. "String him up to the yard-arm, cap'n."

"I've got to catch him first," said Jack. "But what will your men with Sam Parsons do?"

"They daren't go back into our waters. They'll have to potter about these coasts, sir," replied Ben.

"I wish we could help you to get back the 'Sea-horse; she'd take us all back to England," said Jack, thoughtfully.

"And that's a true saying," answered Ben. "What I'm thinking is, cap'n, that if you'll let me sail along of you, I'll sign articles, and go ahead this minute."

"You want to join us?"

"Heart and soul, sir. We'll get back the beautiful young lady of whom you was a-speaking. We'll hang our mutineers, or take 'em in irons to the first port where there's a British Consul, and we'll sail her back to old England."

"A stunning idea. But there's a lot to be done first," answered Jack. "However, I gladly accept your offer of friendship, Ben. You shall be one of us."

"That's done me more good than I expected, when the muzzle of your gun brought me up all standing just now. Thank you kindly, cap'n. I'm true blue, and you wouldn't find a dog more faithful than Ben Blunt to those he takes to."

"We've got some stores inside the cave. Will you eat something?"

"I could stow away a chunk of beef and bread, cap'n, for my belly cries cupboard. But I say, sir."

"What?"

"Let's give one cheer for old England. I'm so happy I'm fit to bust, and all along of meeting you. Just now I thought I should die of starvation, or snakes, or tigers, or niggers, or some of the varmint that grows here, and now I'm up to the mast-head again. Just a little un' for old England, sir."

"I'm with you," cried Jack. "Go it, my old sea-horse. Hurrah for Old England! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Ben Blunt joined in, and their ringing cheers woke up the echoes in the island.

They did more.

They woke up Mr. Mole, who came out of the cave in a bad temper, to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

"What is the meaning of this unseemly riot, Harkaway?" said Mr. Mole. "It is hard I cannot enjoy my natural rest. And who is this stranger?"

"Ben Blunt the bo'sun, sir, at your honour's service," replied that individual.

"I am in a fog. Explain the mystery to me, Harkaway."

Jack did so.

"You see, sir," added Ben, "I cut down the top hamper, and took in all sail under stress of weather; but I'm drifted into port after all."

"And we're going to recapture the ship, and hang the mutineers, sir," said Jack. "That's why we're cheering."

"Mind you are not cackling over an addled egg, my young friend," said Mr. Mole. "However, I'm glad to see our new friend Ben, and cheerfully hold out the hand of welcome."

"The more the merrier, sir."

"And now I'll turn in again," said Mr. Mole sleepily.

"Going to bye-bye again, sir? Don't do that. We're going to have a can of grog to celebrate Ben's arrival. Come and join us; don't be a hen, sir."

"A hen, Harkaway?"

"Yes, sir; be a cock for once."

"Grog is not to be lightly refused. You have put a different complexion on the case, and I will condescend to join you," replied Mr. Mole. "Arouse that lazy slumberer Harvey, with a poke in the ribs."

Going into the cave, which somewhat resembled the abode of the robbers in "Gil Blas," Jack woke up Harvey.

"Turn out, Dick," he exclaimed.

"What for?" asked Harvey.

"There's a gentleman from England come to see you."

"Go on," said, Harvey, "you're having larks."

"I'm not," answered Jack. "You go outside, and see."

Harvey did so, and was at once introduced to Mr. Benjamin Blunt, otherwise Ben Blunt the bo'sun.

He was much astonished at hearing his story, but, like Mr. Mole and Jack, delighted to have such an addition to their little party.

"Axing your pardon, sir," said Ben, pointing into the cave, "are there any more of them to come out?"

"No; that's the lot."

"Then I'll take this mossal of victuals we was speaking of, that is, by your leave, cap'n," said Ben.

A dinner was hastily provided, and the cup that cheers passed round.

Ben became a favourite in less than no time.

He took his turn in watching and went out to scour the country with Jack to find some trace of Hunston, but in vain.

Days passed, and Jack grew sick at heart with his want of success.

They met isolated bands of Pisangs occasionally, but the poor fellows ran away like hunted hares.

Their city was burnt, the flower of their warriors killed, and they were no longer a great nation.

A week had elapsed, during which Jack's exertions on behalf of Emily had been unremitting.

"I'd give my life to save her," he kept on saying to himself.

One morning Ben the bo'sun was on the look-out.

Suddenly he exclaimed—

"Sail on the larboard bow, sir."

Jack was dozing under a tree, and thinking of Emily.

"Where away?" he asked, springing up.

Ben Blunt pointed it out, and Jack saw a small boat approaching.

Taking up a telescope he distinctly made out one man in her.

As she got nearer he recognized Monday.

"It's our native, whom we call Monday," said he by way of explanation. "The faithful fellow has kept his word, and is coming back."

In less than an hour, guided by a signal flag, Monday made the island, and was shaking hands in true British fashion with his young master.

"Well, Monday, what's the news?" asked Jack.

"Who that man?" inquired Monday, pointing to Ben.

Jack told him all about the new arrival, but Monday did not seem to take kindly to him.

"You asked what news, sare," he continued. "Nothing much to tell. The funeral over and now all Limbi very gay celebrating victory. It all one big drink and war-dance. You found Miss Em'ly?"

"No; I wish I had."

"Some one come for Mr. Mole soon," exclaimed Monday.

"What! his wives are coming?"

"That it, sare. Alfura and Ambonia tell me they sail over."

"We can't have them here. There is no room for a parcel of women. He'll have to look out for a cave of his own."

"Mist' Mole not like that much, sare," replied Monday. Adding, "Oh, sare, here he is. He heard all we say."

Mr. Mole had indeed come out of the cave, and was looking the picture of blank despair.

"Harkaway," he said, in a sepulchral voice, "is this true?"

"What, sir?"

"About my—ahem!—my wives coming over here!"

"Monday says so, sir."

Mr. Mole made a rush toward the sea and Jack, becoming alarmed, ran after him.

"What are you going to do, sir?" he cried, as he held him back.

"Let me go!" replied Mr. Mole. "I will commit suicide. Let me go, I say! The awful prospect of Ambonia's presence is more than I can bear."

"Don't be silly, sir," Jack replied. "If they do come we'll protect you. But perhaps we shall be gone away before that time."

Mr. Mole stepped on to dry land again, and heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"You have put new life into me, my young friend," he replied. "I will live. Oh, that I had the wings of a bird. I'd like to be a bird, Harkaway."

"Have a drink, sir, and pull yourself together. We can't spare you."

"What's that the gentleman says?" asked Ben Blunt.

"He's afraid his wives are coming to fetch him, Ben," replied Jack.

"There's only one enemy, sir, a sailor knocks under to,

and that's woman. He's not a true sailor, if he doesn't strike his flag to a petticoat," replied Ben with a laugh.

"My good, amiable and worthy tar," replied Mr. Mole, "oblige me by not indulging your merriment at my expense. My domestic troubles are my own."

"Belay, sir! I'll put a stopper on my tongue, though there was no offence meant," answered Ben.

Mr. Mole retired into the cave, and was not seen again all day, though when Jack looked for him at night, he found him lying on his back snoring hard, with an empty bottle on each side.

When he was gone, Ben Blunt said—

"May I make bold to ask how many wives the gentleman has got, sir?"

"Only two," replied Jack.

"Oh, that's one for week-days and an extra partner for Sundays; still, the ship's not short-handed with two. I've got one at home, and stop my grog if she isn't one too many sometimes!"

Old Ben laughed heartily, and Jack, taking Monday with him, went out as usual to search for Emily.

They had not gone far before they saw a Pisang asleep under a bush.

"Look, sare, look!" he cried.

"Don't kill him, Monday; catch him alive," Jack replied, hastily. "Creep up slowly. He may give us some valuable information."

Monday glided up through the long grass to where the sleeping Pisang lay.

The latter was unsuspicious of the presence of an enemy.

Jack looked on with his rifle at full cock, to be ready for any emergency.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIRD HAS FLOWN.

"HOLD him tight, Monday," cried Jack.

This advice was not altogether unnecessary, for as soon as Monday fell upon the sleeping Pisang he awoke, and began to writhe and wriggle like an eel.

"You come help, sare," exclaimed Monday out of breath. How um beast kick."

"He's as slippery as an eel," said Jack, coming up, "but we'll fix him. Soho! gently there. No kicking over the traces, my boy, or I shall have to take the curb up a hole or two."

In a few minutes the Pisang was sitting on the ground with his hands tied behind him with a piece of rattan.

His face evinced the utmost astonishment, mixed with fear.

That he was doomed to lose his life in some cruel manner, he did not doubt for a single moment.

"I'm going to ask you some questions," said Jack.

The Pisang stared sullenly at him.

"If you answer truthfully I will spare your life; if you trifle with me you'll have an ounce of lead showing the daylight the way into your ugly carcase. Will you speak the truth?"

"Ya, ya, Tuan," answered the captive, his eyes brightening

This was equivalent to "Yes, yes, chief," and it was clear that if he had any information to give he would not withhold it.

"You know the Tuan Biza whom you call Hunstani. Where is he now?"

"On the island still."

"Do you mean that he intends to go away?"

"Ya, all go soon," replied the captive. "Several chiefs, with women and children, have gone already. We are not going to remain in Pisang, since you have burned the city and killed our best warriors."

"Where are you going to?" asked Jack.

"Long, long way; to the city of the Golden Towers," answered the man.

Jack inquired where that was, but the fellow could not tell him.

All he knew was that it was a long way off, and that it was reached in boats which sailed across the sea.

"Have you seen a white woman, who was wrecked on your coast?" continued Jack.

His voice trembled a little as he put this question, because it would let him know something about Emily's movements, if faithfully answered.

"Ya, Tuan."

"Is she with Hunstani?"

"No," the Pisang answered; "she has gone away with the others to the city of the Golden Towers."

Something like a groan broke from Jack.

"Gone," he repeated. "Hunston has outwitted me again. Just when I think I have got him into a corner, he bests me."

He paced up and down impatiently.

"Any more thing to ask him, sare?"

"No."

"Monday let um go?"

"You may as well. I promised him his life, and I have no reason to think he has been humbugging me," said Jack.

Untying the rattan, Monday gave him a friendly kick to start him.

"You go 'long," he said; "you no good, you can't fight. Go home to the old women, and say you've seen your master."

The Pisang did not stay to reply, he was too glad to get away; and running with the speed of the wind, was soon lost to sight.

Jack lay down under a tree, which happened to be a palm, and fretted and fumed at the news he had just heard.

The sudden and unexpected emigration of the Pisangs was very annoying.

He had fancied that they could not get away, and that sooner or later he would discover the hiding-place where Hunston kept Emily.

Monday was thirsty, and wanted some cocoanuts, so, without thinking of his young master, he began to throw sticks up at the palm-tree.

For a time he was unsuccessful.

Then he cut off a large ripe cluster.

Jack at that moment started up, crying—

"It's a case of no thoroughfare. The way's blocked, and I'm floored, by Jove!"

He had scarcely spoken the words, than the cluster of cocoanuts hit him on the back, which was slightly bent, after grazing his head.

The force of the blow brought him on his knees, and looking round, he exclaimed—

"Bless your eyes, Monday, what foolishness are you up to now?"

"Monday him dry, sare, and knock down nut."

"You needn't upset my apple-cart, if you are thirsty. I beg leave to observe that my head is not made of cast-iron."

Monday laughed, and began to suck a cocoanut.

"Halves!" continued "Jack. I think I deserve some of the milk."

When they had satisfied their thirst they prepared to return to the cave.

"I am glad," said Jack, "I know what the Pisangs are doing, though I did not expect they would leave the island. That beggar told the truth, I suppose."

"Yes, sare," answered Monday; "him speak um truth safe enough. He too much funk to tell a lie."

"Did you ever hear of the city of the Golden Towers?"

"Yes; Monday hear of him."

"Where is it?" asked Jack.

"Great way off over the sea. Go in boat."

"Who lives there?"

"Malay. All fierce, cruel Malay. They have ships, and go and take other ships, either kill all on board, or carry them home and make slave."

"You mean they are pirates."

"That it, sare," replied Monday, with a sagacious nod.

"Is the city made of gold, or is that only a tale of the natives?"

"Once a Limbi man was taken prisoner by the Malay, he escape and come back, and tell us it one fine city full of towers and palaces, all made of gold."

"It must be a fine place, though I don't believe in its being all gold. That is a stretch beyond my imagination," said Jack thoughtfully.

"Oh! it right enough, Mast' Jack, all built of gold! Very fine, grand city," exclaimed Monday.

"Well, we shall have a chance of judging soon, for I mean to go there."

"How go there, sare?"

"You have heard Ben Blunt speak of his ship the 'Sea-horse,' which the mutineers have got possession of?"

"Yes; Monday hear him talk of um."

"I mean to have that ship."

"That jolly, Mast' Jack. Fine thing to have ship of one's own, and sail 'bout anywhere," said Monday. "But how it to be done?"

"You leave that to me; we'll work it somewhow," Jack answered confidently.

It was now noon, and the heat of the sun was so intense that they were glad to regain the cool precincts of the cave.

No one was to be seen outside, but when Jack whistled Mr. Mole came out.

"Don't think, Harkaway, that I am neglectful of my duty," said he; "I was on the alert."

"The guard should be outside, sir!" exclaimed Jack; "there are Pisangs about."

"Have you seen any?"

"Yes, we caught one; but what were you doing in the cave?" asked Jack.

"You'll laugh at me," replied Mr. Mole; "but I fancy there is a Pisang concealed there."

"Nonsense, sir; what makes you think that?"

"You know that Harvey slung up some boards to the top of the cave, to make a sort of shelf to put things on?"

"Yes."

"Well," continued Mr. Mole, "I was sitting down under that shelf, when I heard a curious noise and rustling overhead, as if some heavy animal was moving about."

"I won't say that a Pisang wouldn't be up to any low dodge," said Jack; "at all events we'll go and see what it is."

Monday and Jack entered the cave, which was only imperfectly lighted.

Having come out of the garish and blinding sunshine, it was some time before they could accustom their eyes to the semi-darkness of the cavern.

At length, looking up, Jack clearly saw a large mass of something overhead.

Gazing more carefully, he could distinguish yellow and black marks, like tortoise-shell.

"Oh, sare," cried Monday, "what um lark! It um big snake. Oh, my! such a whopper, sare!"

"You are right, Mon. It is a snake, and as well as I make out, far and away the biggest I ever saw," said Jack.

As he continued to gaze, the indistinct mass resolved itself into a huge serpent compactly coiled up into a kind of knot.

He could detect his head and his bright eyes in the very centre of its folds.

The sound which had alarmed and puzzled Mr. Mole was now explained.

During the night the snake must have crawled into the cave, and taken up a comfortable position on Harvey's shelf.

Perhaps the cave was its regular dwelling place, and it had no idea of being turned out by the new-comers.

"What is to be done?" asked Jack.

He had tackled the python on board the vessel he came out in, but he did not care about another encounter of the same kind.

His voice aroused Harvey and Ben Blunt, who were equally alarmed.

Mr. Mole actually shook in his shoes.

"I can't stand them pesky varmint," said Ben Blunt. "Never could abide the critters."

"And I was just under him," cried Mr. Mole with a shudder. "It's a mercy he let me alone."

"Monday have um out!"

"You!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes; me kill much big snake in our country. All you go out of the cave, and stand ready with guns and axes. Monday show how to do the trick."

Monday's instructions were obeyed, and he went to work immediately in a business-like manner.

He made a strong noose of rope, and taking up a long pole in his disengaged hand, began to poke at the snake.

The reptile began to slowly unfold itself.

By a clever throw he got the noose over the reptile's head, and tightened it about its body.

Then he began to drag it down.

The serpent resisted with all its might, coiling around anything it could lay hold of.

Strong though Monday was, the snake gave him plenty of work to do.

First he got the advantage, then the serpent won a yard or two.

It was "pull devil, pull baker."

The boys laughed at the singular contest till the tears ran down their cheeks.

Monday jabbered away at the snake, and perspired at every pore.

"You black thief," cried Monday, "come out dat, or I'll give you something. Oh, you beast; go in 'gain, will you? Come out that, I say, won't you? Then Monday have your head, you old villain."

"This is extremely comical," observed Mr. Mole, who being at a safe distance, had recovered his presence of mind.

"Haul on the rope, lad. Never let him cast anchor!" cried Ben Blunt, who enjoyed the scene as much as any one.

"Go it, Monday! I'll bet on Monday. Who'll take the odds?" exclaimed Jack.

"Done with you for a tenner," replied Harvey. "Just for the fun of the thing I'll lay the snake gets off through some hole or other."

"And I'll bet he don't," answered Jack.

They watched the varying contest with increasing interest, and it was clear from the loudness of Monday's tone that he was losing his temper.

CHAPTER XII.

HUNSTON'S NEW FRIENDS.

The snake was certainly a formidable antagonist.

It was fully twelve feet long and very thick.

Such reptiles were common in these islands, and had been known to do much mischief, as they frequently swallowed a little child.

Suddenly Monday dropped the rope, and quick as lightning he caught hold of the creature's tail.

He ran out of the cave so quickly, still holding on, that the reptile seemed quite confounded, and did not know what to do.

"Look out, sare," cried Monday. "Now him come. Mist' Mole, mind um eye."

Directly he had dragged the snake out of the cave,

Monday swung it round with all his strength, intending to knock its head against a tree.

Mr. Mole, however, was in the way.

The snake hit him on the head, and he fell down sprawling on the ground and howling dismally.

Monday was obliged to let go, and the reptile crept under the boat which had been drawn up near the cave.

It was difficult to say which was the most frightened, Mr. Mole or the snake.

"Poke um out, sare. Now we got him," cried Monday, who was fairly excited by this time.

Jack took up the pole which Monday had dropped and began to poke under the boat.

"There it goes! Tally ho! Stole away!" exclaimed Harvey, who saw the reptile gliding out at the other side.

Monday was after it like a shot.

He cleverly grasped its tail again, and with a quick jerk swung it round.

This time its head struck against a tree, and it fell confused and hurt to the ground.

Ben Blunt and Jack now fell upon it with hatchets, and it was quickly dispatched.

"That's the way we kill um snake, sare," said Monday, standing in triumph over the quivering body.

"Bravo! You can do it," exclaimed Jack; adding, "Where's Mr. Mole?"

This gentleman had crept under a bush, and his voice was heard faintly exclaiming—

"Is it dead? Have you killed the brute?"

"Dead as a door-nail, sir," replied Jack.

Mr. Mole came out into the open air.

"I hope you did not think I was afraid," said he. "That would be a misconception I should be very sorry for you to put on my conduct."

"If you didn't hoist the white flag in token of surrender," observed Ben Blunt, "why, I never saw anything so much like it."

"Man," replied Mr. Mole, "it is unbecoming for a common seaman like you, to pass judgment upon me."

"On the likes of you," said Ben, with a hearty laugh. "We're all equal in the forecastle, mate. So tip us your flapper. There are no bones broke."

"I distinctly refuse to place myself on a footing of familiarity with you," answered Mr. Mole.

"Jack's as good as his master," remarked Ben. "But I don't want to run my ship where she's not required."

"Ben didn't mean any offence," said Jack. "It's only his way, sir."

"Then it's a very nasty, disagreeable habit, Harkaway," answered Mr. Mole. "I stopped the snake very cleverly. If it had not been for me, he might have crushed that poor black fellow to death. I don't like Mr. Blunt's jeers. I will not be mocked by him."

"Avast there, sir," said Ben. "I'll say you killed the varmint, if that will please you."

"It will not please me, because it would be untrue," Mr. Mole replied. "But I assert, and will maintain that without me the reptile would not have come to so sudden an end."

No one contradicting this assertion, Mr. Mole looked grandly around him, and went to examine the dead monster.

During the day Jack had the snake buried, as its remaining in the sun would have created an unpleasant smell so near the cave.

Then he took Harvey on one side, and told him what he had heard respecting Emily.

"She's gone, Dick, and what am I to do?" said Jack.

"I don't believe in this golden city," replied Harvey. "It is most likely a rich and luxurious place where the pirates live."

"So I think. It is a comfort to know that Emily is removed from Hunston, if only for a short time."

"Of course he means to join her as soon as possible, and imagines you will never find her."

"He's mistaken if he does," answered Jack, with his old look of determination. "I'll never rest till I have found her."

"It wouldn't be a bad dodge to capture Hunston and make him take us to her," said Harvey.

"If we could ; but there is no telling where he is hiding. He's got a cave like ours, I expect; look how I've hunted for him."

"Let's have another try, shall we? Have you been round the coast?"

"No; inland chiefly."

"It's cool, now. Come for a stroll about the beach," continued Harvey. "I should think Hunston is more likely to be near the sea, so as to have access to his boats and be able to cut it, if hard pressed."

"You're right, by gum," said Jack. "I feel there is sense in what you say. Come on."

They took up their arms, saw that the caps were all right, and started on their journey.

After travelling about three or four miles, they saw a handsome ship not very far from land.

She lowered a boat, and a party of men got into her and pulled for the shore.

"I say, Dick, I'll bet a new hat that's the 'Seahorse,'" exclaimed Jack.

"Ben Blunt's ship?"

"Yes; the one the mutineers have taken possession of, after murdering their officers."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Harvey. "But what a precious set of rascals they must be."

"This Sam Parsons, from all accounts, is a beauty. If all Ben says of him is true, he's a caution. What shall we do?"

"Perhaps," replied Jack, "they're coming on shore for water, or to have a spree. They don't expect to find white men here. Let's get as close to where they are likely to land, as we can without being seen, and fog them."

"All right. Creep along behind these bushes, they will hide us," said Harvey.

The boys made their way cautiously along, and whenever they looked up they could see that the boat was coming nearer.

At last they could hear the measured sound of the oars in the rowlocks.

"Let's pitch here," said Jack, deeming it prudent to call a halt.

He pointed as he spoke to a clump of trees that afforded excellent shelter, at the same time giving them a capital view of the sandy shore.

There were fifteen men in the boat.

Two remained in her when she was beached, and the others landed.

Some carried small casks, so that it was evident that they were in search of water as Jack had surmised.

These started in various directions, and half-a-dozen stayed under a clump of trees, throwing themselves down and beginning to smoke and drink.

Suddenly a form emerged from behind a rock, and advanced to the men.

All sprang to their feet and grasped their arms.

"Look, Dick, that's Hunston," whispered Jack.

"So it is. What's his game?"

"Stand close. We shall see directly," replied Jack.

Hunston, for it was he, stopped, and the leader of the sailors exclaimed—

"Who goes there?"

"A friend," replied Hunston.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes, with the exception of a few friendly natives. Who are you?"

"My name is Sam Parsons," was the answer; "and I'm the captain of that ship you see riding in the offing. Now, who and what are you?"

"I was wrecked on one of these islands with some companions, but we've had a split," replied Hunston.

"Where are the others?" asked Parsons.

"On this island, too. We've had a fight, and they've beaten us."

"Are they armed?"

"They are," answered Hunston; "but if you'd join me, we'd soon settle their hash."

"You seem a free and easy sort of chap,' said Sam Parsons; "and if you like to turn pirate, you're welcome to a berth with us."

"Pirate?" repeated Hunston.

"Yes. Is there anything wonderful in that?" answered the mutineer. "We didn't like our officers, so we——"

"He drew his hand significantly across his throat.

"Gave them a free passage to the other world, eh?" said Hunston, with a grim smile. "That's just my style, and if you'll have me, I'll cut and hang with the best of you."

"Well said, my hearty!" exclaimed Sam Parsons. "You're made of the right stuff, and a man of bette

kidney never sailed under the black flag, I can see. Come and join us in a glass of grog."

"That I'll do with pleasure, for I've tasted nothing strong than water this many a long day," said Hunston.

The men dropped their arms, and they were soon pledging each other.

They seemed to consider Hunston an acquisition, and crowded round him to hear the story which he recounted.

"So you want to have a slap at your old friends?" said Sam Parsons.

"That's my pious intention. I wasn't strong enough without you, but with you we can easily do it."

"Where are they?"

"About four or five miles up along the coast. They've got a cave, and are well armed; still we might surprise them at night."

"How many are there of them?" continued the mutineer.

"Two youngsters, a middle-aged man, a native, and a sailor-looking sort of cove who has only just joined them," replied Hunston.

"How do you know this?"

"Because I watched them this morning, one of my natives having met them. He pretended to run away from them, but turned back and tracked them to their lair. He took me close to them afterwards, so I know it's all right."

"What's this sailor like?"

"He's a bluff sort of fellow, and they call him Ben Blunt," answered Hunston.

"Hang me if I didn't think so. It's Ben Blunt the bo'sun!" cried Sam Parsons.

"And who may he be?"

"Why, he was in our ship's company, and being the only officer we liked, we spared his life and put him ashore here. So he's joined the enemy!"

"Yes, that's the lot."

"Oh, by the Lord Harry," continued the mutineer, "we must have a slap at Ben. He may get off the island with his new mates, and he knows enough to send a man-of-war after us, and get the lot of us strung up."

A savage smile lighted up Hunston's countenance.

"You're with me, then?" he said. "Let us attack them in the grey dawn of to-morrow morning."

"Right you are, my hearty! What do you say, lads?"

"Aye, aye," responded the mutineers, in answer to Sam Parsons's appeal.

Harvey grasped Jack's hand.

"It's lucky we came out," he said, in a low tone.

"Yes," replied Jack. "Now we're warned we shall be a match for them, though if they'd surprised us and killed our sentry, we should have been shot like parrots as we came out of the cave."

"Shall we go back now, and fortify ourselves?"

"I think so. Those fellows who are out for water may see us if we stop," replied Jack.

With the same caution they had exercised in advancing, they beat a retreat.

They were disgusted with Hunston's constant enmity, and feared they would have no peace while he lived.

Mr. Mole and Monday had been preparing dinner, and having been successful in killing a hog that had escaped from its pen when Palembang was burnt, a very savoury smell of roast pork greeted them as they approached.

"Come along, Harkaway," exclaimed Mr. Mole. "We've got a spread fit for a king."

"All right, sir; pitch in," replied Jack. "I've got some startling news for you, but it shan't take away my appetite."

"Anything new?" asked Ben Blunt.

"The 'Sea-horse' is anchored off the shore, a few miles away, and our old enemy, Hunston, has met with and joined the mutineers."

"Is Sam Parsons ashore?"

"That he is," replied Jack. "He and his confederates have hoisted the black flag, and they mean to attack us to-morrow morning."

"The deuce they do!" said Mr. Mole, who was in the act of conveying a savoury piece of pork to his mouth.

"The villains!" replied Ben Blunt. "It's all that Sam Parsons, though I could manage the rest of the crew, if it wasn't for him."

"It's you they want, Ben," continued Jack. "They are afraid of you since Hunston has told them you are with us. They say you can hang them."

"That's true enough; but hanging at the yard-arm is too good for Sam Parsons."

"Never mind; we won't give you up, Ben; we'll fight for you."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Ben Blunt; "I'll challenge Sam to fight me in single combat with cutlasses, and let the best man win. That'll save bloodshed."

"Bravo!" cried Jack. "I like a fair stand-up fight."

"Will he consent?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Oh, Sam's plucky enough. He'll fight."

"And you mean to propose that if you beat him they shall let us alone, and we won't interfere with him," said Jack.

"That's just the idea," answered Ben.

"I've got an amendment to propose," said Harvey.

"What's that?" asked Jack.

"Only this:—When the fight is over, whichever way it goes, get up a big drink; you and I will steal away, get into a boat and board the ship."

"They'll have men on guard," said Ben.

"Of course they will, but you forget that where there are no officers, there is no discipline. The men will be drunk or asleep. I know what sailors are well enough."

"Let me go with you, Harvey. I should like to share in that glorious enterprise," said Mr. Mole.

"More by token, the gentleman would not like to be left with Sam Parsons and his mutineers," replied Ben, with a grin.

"Silence, my good fellow," answered Mr. Mole. "My bravery has been tried often and often, in the hour of danger. We have got to see what you can do."

"Let us all go," said Jack.

"Better still," Mr. Mole continued. "If our friend Ben here is victorious, he will be of service, and when we have made friends with the mutineers, and they are all intoxicated, we will sail for the vessel."

"Monday know a plant which make um all sleep till this time next week," exclaimed the black.

"Do you propose to drug them?"

"That it, Mist' Mole. Put something in one big stone bottle, that for them; put nothing but rum in another, that for us."

"Excellent! The thanks of the meeting are, I think,

due to Harvey and Monday for two excellent ideas. Eat up your pig, Monday, and go in search of the drug," said Mr. Mole.

"If it all comes off, it will be ripping," exclaimed Jack.

"We'll do our little worst, anyhow," remarked Harvey.

After dinner the cave was strengthened by the erection of some mounds of earth which protected the entrance.

Each defender could crouch behind one of those little hills, and fire at the enemy without being exposed himself.

Monday procured the herb he wanted, and put large quantities of it into a big bottle of rum.

The guns were all loaded.

Each member of the little board took up a position assigned him by Jack.

The oars were put in the boat, which was moored near the shore so as to be ready at a moment's notice.

Anxiously the moments glided by.

Each heart beat quickly, for the coming day was pregnant with events of importance.

CHAPTER XIII.

SENDING THE CHALLENGE.

THE excitement attendant upon the expected attack of the mutineers prevented any of the party from sleeping.

They sat outside the cave with their arms ready to their hands, and Monday walked up and down with a loaded rifle.

Mr. Mole had a bottle of rum, and dispensed the grog with a liberality which won the heart of Ben Blunt.

"You're a gentleman, every inch of you, sir," he exclaimed; "I can see by the way you handle the liquor."

"No personal allusions, if you please, my worthy friend," replied Mr. Mole.

"I can't help it, cap'n. What I've got in my mind must come out. Now, if it isn't a rude question, what do you think it cost you to colour your nose? It must have been a tidy sum, but you can make a rough guess."

It was a fact that Mr. Mole's nose had assumed a rosy hue of late, and shone like a fiery beacon on a dark night.

"Nonsense, my good fellow!" he exclaimed. "It's the hot sun of these infernal regions. You're mistaken when you ascribe the effect to intemperance. It's nothing of the sort. Pass the bottle."

"Right, sir. B'ilers require water; quite nat'ral."

"Now, then," said Jack, "don't you two get sparring."

Mr. Mole had sprung up, as if he intended to correct Ben Blunt by striking him.

But Jack pushed him back again.

Putting one hand on his head and the other on Ben's he said, in an unctuous voice like that of a clergyman—

"Bless you! ber-less you, my children! Kiss and be friends."

"Remove your hand from my head instantly, Harkaway!" cried Mr. Mole. "It's a liberty I allow no man to take!"

"Kiss and be friends, then," said Jack; "we can't have you fighting. Wait for the mutineers."

"You're becoming very impertinent," continued Mr. Mole. "Both you and Harvey seem to have lost the respect you ought to entertain for me. Don't take any more liberties with me, Harkaway, or you'll hear more of it."

"Hullo!" cried Jack. "What's the matter? You're out of order, sir. Whose pills do you take?"

"Never mind; I will keep my place as leader of this party and protector of you poor defenceless boys: you keep yours. It is my province to command, yours to obey."

Jack smiled and winked at Harvey.

"If so be as the gentleman wants a turn up on the grass, man to man, a fair field and no favour, I'm ready for him," remarked Ben Blunt.

"I do not fight," replied Mr. Mole. "Such low and blackguard practices may suit Whitechapel roughs."

"Hang me if I know how to take him. I'm game. I was never sick or sorry an hour in my life, and if he means fitting, why, I'll fit," said Ben.

"Don't you make any mistake, Ben," replied Jack.

"Mr. Mole is as game as a pebble, and would come up fresh as a daisy after the fiftieth round. Don't you provoke him."

"What's he keep snacking at me for?"

"It is not for a boatswain, or whatever you call yourself, to insult a man of education like myself, understand that," exclaimed Mr. Mole, proudly.

"The likes of you! And what be I?"

"An indifferent cross, I should say between an idiot and a sea-cow," replied Mr. Mole, who was rapidly drinking more than he ought to.

Jack and Harvey roared with laughter at this sally.

Mr. Mole smiled blandly at this token of their approval.

"That's good. I flatter myself that's good, eh Harkaway," he said.

"Stunning, sir. You've spotted him to a T."

"He asked my candid opinion, and I gave it him."

"Well, I'm blowed, gents," exclaimed Ben Blunt, getting as red as a turkeycock. "He's a-giving it me a rum 'un all round the hoop and no kid. Cross atween a hidiot and a sea-cow. Blow me tight! That's a nice thing to say about a respectable cove, whose father fought with Nelson in the 'Victory,' and whose mother took in officers' washing at Portsmouth. I'll spoil his figurehead!"

"Harvey, hold that misguided man while I hit him on the head with a stick," exclaimed Mr. Mole, adding, in a whisper, "Harkaway, what shall I do?"

"Cheek it out, sir."

"Mutinous dog, forbear!" continued Mr. Mole. "You were the companion of mutineers. I will put you in chains, and convey you to your native land, there to await the judgment of your outraged countrymen."

Harvey had great difficulty in restraining Ben, who was speechless with rage and indignation.

"I think I've settled him," said Mr. Mole, with a hiccup. "What was it that broke the thingamy's back, Harkaway?"

"Straw, sir. Last straw broke the camel's back."

"Precisely. Turn to your natural history, and you find that the camel is a native of Bactria."

Mr. Mole took Ben's quiet attitude for cowardice.

His courage rose accordingly.

"You need not hold the poor wretch any longer,

Harvey. Let him go," he said. "I think I have snuffed him out."

"He's in a mortal funk, sir. I don't know what it is, but there's something about you which knocks them all over," replied Harvey.

"It's my bearing, Harvey, my majestic bearing."

Suddenly Ben found his tongue, and sprang to his feet.

"I'll give him something!" he gasped, "when I've finished with him, he shall have a cock eye and a game leg. There won't be much what d'ye call—bearing about that. Sink me, if there will."

"My word, sir," whispered Jack; "his monkey's up. You'd better cut and run."

"Run, Harkaway! I'd scorn to. But do you really think he means it? I thought I'd cowed him."

"Cut into the cave, sir. I'll square it in two minutes."

Ben Blunt was coming on at full speed, like an iron-clad ram with the steam full on.

Mr. Mole made a clean bolt into the cave, and began to barricade the entrance with some wood and bits of rock.

Jack stopped Ben Blunt, and exclaimed—

"Steady, Ben; steady!"

"Steady she is, sir," replied Ben, who was too good a sailor not to pull up when spoken to by one whom he considered his superior officer.

"Drop anchor, Ben."

"Lower away, my lads," replied Ben; adding, as he sat down—

"She's swung round to her moorings, sir."

"Right, Ben. Now listen to me. We make allowance for Mr. Mole. He is our senior, and we take no notice of what he says. He's privileged, Ben."

"That's all well enough, sir," cried Ben. "I'm no scholard, but it's hard to be called sea-cows an cussed hidiots, ain't it now?"

"All chaff, Ben. Nothing but empty chaff. I'll take my oath he didn't mean it. He's a good sort when you know him."

"Then may I be wrecked on a lee shore if I want to know him."

"Step aft, Ben, and say there's no bad blood between you. He's the bung on board this ship, and will stop your grog if you ain't civil."

"Will he 'pologise for the sea-cow, sir, think ye?" asked Ben, scratching his head dubiously.

"Avast there, Ben. He's your superior officer. Never strike your flag, Ben, but always doff your hat to the ward-room."

"You're right, sir. Tell him to come out. I won't hurt him," answered Ben Blunt, who was a good-natured fellow, and easily pacified.

Jack went to the cave and said—

"It's supper time, sir; come and join us."

"Is—is that wild sailor-fellow inclined to make peace, Harkaway?" asked Mr. Mole, looking cautiously through a hole in his barricade.

"He's like a lamb, sir."

"Is he? Then I'll venture out. I don't like mutineers as a rule. Not that I am afraid of any man living, but directly I recollected he was a mutineer, I thought it best to get out of the dog's way," answered Mr. Mole.

"Now, then, Dick," cried Jack, "wake up! See what there is in the larder, and put on the feed."

"There's cold venison and some bird stuff or other—parrot, I think," answered Harvey.

"All right; put it on. We'll make a night of it, and fight the enemy all the better when they come."

Mr. Mole emerged from the cave, and was induced to shake hands with Ben, who showed no further ill-feeling.

The "feed," as Jack called it, was put "on," and a very pleasant evening passed.

In a short time the daylight came and everybody was very valiant, especially Mr. Mole and Ben Blunt.

"Sam Parsons knows me well enough," exclaimed Ben, "and I don't believe that he'll show up."

"I've got an idea, Ben," said Jack.

"Bully for you, sir," replied the boatswain.

"Suppose you send Sam Parsons a challenge."

"I'm game to do that, sir, and fight him as long as I can stand, with cutlashes or pistols, or both."

"Very well; Monday shall take the challenge, but it must be written."

"I'm no scholard, sir, as I said before," answered Ben; "but if so be that your honour will write it out, I'll put my mark to it."

"I've got a pencil and a bit of paper," said Harvey.

"Fork it out, then," replied Jack.

Harvey gave him the pencil and paper, and Jack spread the latter out on his knee.

"What shall I say, Ben?" he asked.

Ben scratched his head, and looked up at the reddening sky, and then down upon the ground.

"It'll run somehow in this way," remarked Ben. "'I, Ben Blunt, late bo'sun of the "Sea-horse," bound from Shanghai to the port of London.' Got that, sir!"

"Yes; 'port of London.' Go ahead."

"'Challenge Sam Parsons, also of the "Sea-horse," and mutineer, to single combat.' Got that, sir?"

"All right; 'single combat.' Cut along."

"'And the said Ben Blunt will fight with cutlashes or pistols, and——' Got pistols, sir?"

"Yes; 'pistols.'"

"'And him as is whopped will have to bury the other, if so be as his lights is put out for ever.'"

"That's lovely! I like the last bit," observed Harvey.

"We'll avenge you, Ben, if you fall," said Jack.

"P'raps Mr. Mole will have a turn at him, sir, if so be as I'm beat," observed Ben.

"Do you think I'd condescend to fight your battle you son of a sea-cook?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, angrily.

"Gents," said Ben, "he's at me again."

"Never mind him; it's his way," answered Jack. "It pleases him and don't hurt you."

"Right, sir," replied Ben. "I only clap on sail when there's a capful of wind; it's when I feel a tempest coming that I take in canvas."

"Vulgar seaman!" said Mr. Mole.

"Well, sir?" inquired Ben.

"Peace, common fellow—peace!" continued Mr. Mole, waving his hand.

"Beg your honour's pardon," said Ben, speaking to Jack; "is that in the articles of war?"

"Yes; hold your noise."

"But sea-cows, and sea-cooks, and vulgar seamens, and common fellows! Why, hang me, if I was a porpoise I couldn't stand it much longer."

"Polish off Sam Parsons first, and then you shall have a go at Mole."

"You promise me that, sir?"

"Religiously."

"Right. I'm dumb as an oyster, and then he'd better batten down his hatch, or I'll walk into his hold," said Ben.

Jack got up and dispatched Monday, with a white flag, to seek out the mutineers.

"Give them this," he said, "and bring us their answer."

"All serene, Mast' Jack; Monday him do it," replied the black.

But he hadn't gone half-a-dozen yards before he ran back in a great state of agitation, crying—

"Here they come, sare—such a lot of 'em! Oh, my, Mast' Jack! look out, sare!"

Each member of the party firmly grasped his weapon and stood on the defensive.

The mutineers of the "Sea-horse" were advancing in force.

It was a critical moment.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SINGLE COMBAT.

"HARVEY," said Mr. Mole, "don't get behind me. Show yourself a man, as I mean to do."

Dick was only kneeling to load his extra rifle, and took no notice of the admonition.

"You, Harvey, are a fine specimen of the *vitulus Britannicus*," continued Mr. Mole.

"Who's he, sir, when he's at home?" answered Harvey, getting up when he had finished loading.

"The British calf. *Vitulus Brit*——oh! get out of my way, Harvey. I will make for the cave. A bullet whistled past my head, and I thought there was only to be a single combat."

As Mr. Mole spoke a couple of shots hurled past and buried themselves in the walls of the cave.

The mutineers had commenced the attack.

"This is getting hot," remarked Harvey.

"Getting hot," replied Jack; "it's boiling hot already.

Monday, hoist the white flag, as a sign we want to parley with them."

Monday did so.

The white flag was simply a bit of an old shirt stuck on the end of a bamboo.

"Hold your fire, Sam Parsons," cried Jack. "Here's a letter I want to show you from an old messmate. Stay where you are. Don't advance another step or we fire."

Hunston at this moment came to the front.

"You haven't taken us by surprise, old fellow," continued Jack.

"Let them have it!" cried Hunston, angrily.

"Hold hard, governor," said Sam Parsons. "If so be as my old shipmate, Ben Blunt——"

"That's me," interposed Ben.

"I can see your old hull," continued Sam. "Well, as I was a-saying, if so be as Ben wants a bit of palaver, I ain't a-going to forget old times, and shan't say nary word against it."

"That's righteous, that is, Sam, and though we ain't cousins, blow me if I don't sort of admire your style!" answered Ben.

"Shoot them all down, you fool; you'll lose your chance!" exclaimed Hunston, more furious than ever.

"Belay, there! It's a truce, Ben, isn't it?" said Sam Parsons.

"Truce it is, Sam."

"Look here, Hunston," exclaimed Jack, "I know you to be a coward and a villain, and so I've covered you with my rifle. If——"

"You wouldn't break the truce?" said Hunston, hastily, fearing Jack meant to kill him.

"No, I shan't do that, but I shall keep my eye on the bead and my finger on the trigger, and if you so much as move half an inch, or open your ugly mouth again, I take my Dick I'll pot you!"

Hunston turned ghastly pale.

But as he looked at Jack, he saw that he had his rifle to his shoulder, and that he could make "dead meat" of him in no time.

So he was obliged to be quiet.

"Ben!" exclaimed the mutineer.

"Here, lad," answered Ben.

"Where's this bit o' writin' you spoke about?"

"Monday!" said Jack.

"Yes, sare," replied the black.

"Deliver the challenge."

Monday advanced to Sam Parsons with the piece of paper on which the challenge was written, and Sam took it up, reading it with difficulty.

Some of his companions crowded round him and helped to make out its contents.

Turning to his lieutenant, Jimmy Clark, Sam said—

"What shall I do, Jim?"

"Do?" repeated Jimmy. "Why, fight him like a man. It's a fair challenge, and if he beats, we'll shake hands all round and let 'em alone."

"Well, if I beat?"

"Why, if you beats we'll shake hands all round, too, and after a good liquor-up, we'll up anchor and part friends," said Jimmy.

"Is that business, Jim?" asked Sam Parsons.

Jimmy had been a clerk somewhere, at some time or the other, and they called him the sea-lawyer.

If anything difficult had to be decided, they always said—

"Go and ask Jimmy Clark: he's our sea-lawyer, and be hanged to him!"

Thus it happened that Jimmy had great influence over his lawless companions.

A little learning is a dangerous thing, and Jimmy hadn't much, but what little he had he made do double duty.

"Of course it's business," replied Jimmy. "If Antony had sent a challenge to Cæsar, to meet him in the Campus Martius, wouldn't Cæsar have accepted it?"

"Then we must fight?"

"You and Ben must fight, that's about the size of it, and I'll bet a demi-quid on you, Sam."

"Right you are Jimmy," said Sam Parsons. "I'm a plucked one."

"You have the choice of weapons, being the challenged party," continued Jimmy. "What will you have?"

"Cutlashes for me," exclaimed Ben.

"You dry up, old whale," exclaimed Jimmy. "It's for my man to choose. What do you want to spout for?"

"Well," said Sam, "cutlashes be it. I never liked to crab a pal, and if Ben Blunt says cutlashes, I'm on with cutlashes."

Two of the mutineers stepped forward, and gave each of the intending combatants a cutlass.

They took the weapons and faced one another.

Both sides made a circle round the principals.

Jack, however, did not lower his rifle, and never took his eye off Hunston.

The single combat was about to begin.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RESULT OF THE FIGHT.

THE two old salts stood opposite one another and flourished their weapons, which glittered in the sunshine.

"Tip us your flapper, Ben," said Sam Parsons.

"Done with you, Sam," replied Ben Blunt; "I've no particular ill-will against you, though you didn't behave quite friendly."

"It's understood, lads," said Jimmy Clark, "that whoever licks we makes friends, and each party goes its own way."

Everyone assented.

"We'll stand the liquor," remarked Harvey, "and all shall be agreeable as far as we can make it."

"All right," replied Jimmy; "I'll back up Sam, and that gentleman with the clerical mug on him will perhaps do the same for Ben."

He pointed to Mr. Mole.

"Did you allude to me?" asked Mr. Mole.

"You're the cove. Step out here and we'll see fair play."

"I can have no possible objection to seconding the champion of our party, but I strongly object to being called the cove with the clerical—what did you say?"

"Mug," replied Jimmy.

"I think I understand your meaning, though I must protest against the vulgarity of your language. However, let that pass. I will do my duty," replied Mr. Mole.

Jimmy Clark took his place behind Sam Parsons.

Mr. Mole took his behind Ben Blunt.

"Make ready," said Jimmy.

The cutlasses described circles in the air.

"At the word 'three,' strike," continued Jimmy.

There was a momentary pause.

Then Jimmy exclaimed—

"One, two, three!"

In an instant the blades crossed and struck fire.

Sam Parsons was a tall, active fellow, but Ben was the stronger of the two.

Perhaps he was not so active as his opponent, though he seemed to understand the sword exercise.

The spectators applauded their respective champions, taking the utmost interest in the contest.

"Lay on, Sam," cried the mutineers. "Stick to him, lad; let him have it!"

While Jack and Harvey said—

"Cut him down, Ben—that's your sort! Be careful, old man. Now you have him!"

Sam Parsons had the honour of dealing the first cut that drew blood.

It was an ugly blow on the left shoulder but it did not disable his opponent.

The pain it caused him made him more furious than ever.

Hunston looked on and gnashed his teeth, for this affair was so different to what he had anticipated.

He intended to have massacred all his own friends, and his plans were spoilt by the chivalrous combat that was taking place.

Of course he was safe with the mutineers, and did not fear being taken prisoner.

They would protect him.

At length, Ben, by a lucky stroke, brought Sam Parsons on one knee, having cut through the tendons of his left leg.

"Good again, Ben! Cut him down!" cried Jack.

"Curse the luck!" gasped the mutineer, still dealing blows with his cutlass.

Ben Blunt was excited, and encouraged by the cries of

his party, rushed forward raised, his weapon with both hands, and brought it down on the defenceless head of his enemy.

There was a groan.

Sam Parsons fell forward on his face, his head being cleft in two to the chin.

The mutineer's last hour had come.

There was a faint gurgle in his throat, a sort of death-rattle, and he gave up the ghost.

With the utmost composure the mutineers removed the body out of sight.

Then Jimmy Clark went up to Ben, and said—

"I guess you're best man, and Sammy's gone home."

"And you're cap'n of the 'Sea-horse,'" replied Ben.

"That's right enough. However, we'll keep our compact. No more fighting. You've done the trick, Ben, and so we'll claim your promise. Bring out the liquor."

Jack was horrified at the careless indifference of those men at the loss of their companion.

A moment's reflection showed him that a ship's crew who had risen against and killed their officers were not likely to give way to tender emotions.

Nor had he any time to waste in a melting mood.

"Monday," he exclaimed.

"Yes, sare," replied the black.

"Bring out the stone bottle—you know which one," he added, in the native language, in a low tone.

Monday nodded his head in a significant manner, and entered the cave.

He returned with a large stone bottle containing rum.

The contents had been drugged with the peculiar herb of which he had spoken.

Harvey and Mr. Mole were attending to Ben Blunt's hurt, which they bound up.

"Now, my lads, bring yourselves to an anchor," exclaimed Jack. "We shan't charge you any more for sitting. Here are some cups, such as we use ourselves, and here's the stuff."

With this he distributed some half cocoa-nut shells, which could not be set down until they were empty, the bottom being round.

The men began to pour out the liquor and Jack spoke to Hunston, saying—

"Are you going to join your new friends?"

"No, I'm not," replied Hunston. "I'm going to take my hook. The sight of you makes me feel ill."

"Does it?" answered Jack, with a sneer. "Then take that with you to remind you of me."

As he spoke he kicked him as hard as he could just as he turned his back.

"You dare——" cried Hunston, in a rage.

Jack levelled a pistol-barrel at him.

"Sheer off," he exclaimed, "or I'll settle accounts with you, and wipe out all I have got against you."

"A time will come," said Hunston, burning with rage.

The next instant he had darted away and was lost to sight in the dense jungle.

Returning to the mutineers Jack saw that they had all drunk.

Then he gave the stone bottle to Monday, saying—

"This is empty; go and get another."

"Ah, that's right," exclaimed Jimmy; "you'll join us. I thought you weren't going to leave us all alone. When we've had this drinking bout out and the truce is over, we shall be at liberty to fight again."

"Oh, yes; I quite understand that," replied Jack.

"You know, we ain't going to let Ben Blunt crow over us."

"Of course not."

"We arranged that poor Sammy and Ben should fight it out, and that there should be a truce," continued Jimmy. "Now we're drinking to our noble selves; but when we leave you here and get out of sight, the war begins again."

"We're ready for you," said Jack.

Mr. Mole approached.

"I think, Harkaway, that I should not be showing the loving kindness of my nature if I did not drink the health of these fine fellows."

"Fire away, sir," answered Jack, handing him a cup full of rum.

Harvey, Ben, and Monday now came in for their share and they all fraternised.

"Ben, you old lubber," said Jimmy, "come and join us, lad, and we'll make you our cap'n."

"Not if I know it, Jimmy," answered Ben.

"You won't? Then to-morrow will see you as low as

poor Sam Parsons, and we shall have lost the two best men in our crew."

"I'll never be a mutineer," replied Ben. "Scuttle me first."

"Come, gentlemen," exclaimed Jack, fearing a quarrel, "let the merry jest go round. We're friends now, whatever we may be to-morrow."

"That's right," answered Jimmy. "Who'll favour us with a song? Will you, sir?"

This request was addressed to Mr. Mole.

"I—I sing?" said Mr. Mole, in surprise. "I never did such a thing in my life. It is totally out of keeping with my character."

"Go on, sir," said Jack. "You can tip them a stave if you like."

"Harkaway, I protest."

"It's no use protesting, sir. You're knocked down for a song, and sing you must. It will be your call afterwards."

Harvey clapped his hands.

"Silence, gentlemen," he said, "silence, please, for Mr. Mole's song."

There was a dead silence, and everybody looked at Mr. Mole.

The unhappy gentleman bestowed a supplicating look upon Jack, who kept his eyes fixed on the ground.

"The penalty for not singing is being ducked in the sea, I believe," remarked Harvey.

Thus stimulated, Mr. Mole sighed, and said—

"If I must, I must, though I can only give you a dimly-remembered trifle of my childhood.

Clearing his throat he sang, in a cracked voice—

"Did you ever, ever, ever see a whale?
Did you ever, ever, ever see a whale?"
Did you——"

"Blarm me," interrupted Ben Blunt, "if I didn't once see a lovely spermaceti whale off the coast——"

"Order, Ben. Shut up," cried Jack. "You're interrupting the harmony."

"Beg pardon, sir. Thought he was speaking to me, acos he looked——"

"Will you dry up?"

Ben collapsed, and Mr. Mole continued—

"Did you ever, ever, ever see a whale?
No, I never, never, never;
No, I never, never, never, saw a whale,
But I've often, often, often;
But I've often, often, often seen a cow."

How much longer Mr. Mole might have gone on with his song it is difficult to say.

His voice, however, was drowned in a rude burst of loud laughter, in which every one joined.

This was followed by hurrahs and bravos, and it became quite a word afterwards with every one to say, "Did you ever see a whale?" and the reply would be, "No, but I've seen a cow."

Mr. Mole sat down and solaced himself with a little refreshment.

"I flatter myself I did that well, Harkaway," remarked Mr. Mole. "I was greeted with applause, and came off with flying colours."

"Certainly, sir," replied Jack. Adding, "Dick, did you ever see a whale?"

At this there was another roar, in which Mr. Mole joined.

"The fact is, Harkaway," continued Mr. Mole, "that it isn't everybody who could sing that song."

"So I should think, sir."

"The words are so simple——"

"Very simple, sir," said Jack, with a grin.

"So simple, I say," continued Mr. Mole, "that a great deal depends on the way it is sung."

Jack now remarked that some of the mutineers were lying on their sides.

The drug was beginning to take effect.

"Hullo! dowse my daylights!" exclaimed Jimmy Clark, "but this is a rummy go. I've come over wonderful sleepy all of a minute."

"Pitch on the ground, then," replied Ben Blunt. "Nobody won't eat you."

Unable to resist the influence of the drug that Monday had mixed with the liquor, the leader sank gently forward.

Directly afterwards he was fast asleep.

One by one the mutineers dropped off, and springing to his feet, Jack exclaimed—

"Now, my boys, are you all armed?"

There was a general chorus in the affirmative.

"Does the boat float, Monday?"

"Yes, sare; him float safe enough," replied Monday.

"Slip your cable then, and away to the 'Sea-horse.' She is ours if we do our duty."

"Hur——" began Harvey.

"Silence, Dick. No holloaing till we're out of the wood. That thief Hunston's slinking about somewhere. We've our work cut out for us yet," interrupted Jack.

They did not know how many men had been left on board the ship.

But their enterprise had succeeded so well, as far as it had gone, that they ran down the beach flushed with hope, and jumped into the boat.

When they were all seated the sail bellied to the breeze, and away they went.

CHAPTER XXI.

TAKING THE SHIP.

THEY had not gone far from the shore when Hunston, who had been hiding in the bushes, crept up to the scene of the late revelry.

The stillness that reigned where just before all had been noise and uproar alarmed him.

The sudden quietude boded no good.

When he saw the mutineers all extended on the ground, he thought they were dead.

But a glance assured him that they slept, and as their hearts beat, and they breathed easily, it was clear that they were not poisoned.

"They have been drugged," he muttered.

His next anxiety was to discover what had become of Jack and his companions.

He reached the cave, and found nobody.

Then he gazed out over the sea, and saw the boat sailing towards the ship.

"Fiend take them!" he cried. "This is Jack's plan, I'll bet a sovereign, and a good one it is too. There cannot be more than half-a-dozen men on board the

'Sea-horse,' and probably they are drunk and keeping no look-out."

He danced about with uncontrollable passion.

All at once he remembered that Sam Parsons had told him he had arranged a signal with those on board the ship.

This was to light a fire.

If the look-out on board the "Sea-horse" saw a fire on the shore, he would know at once that there was danger in the wind.

"I'll try and foil Harkaway, at all hazards," he cried.

Hastily gathering together some sticks, he contrived to light a fire by striking two flints together over some dry grass.

Heaping what wood he could find on the top of it, he soon had a roaring fire.

A black column of smoke ascended high in the air and extended seaward.

"Those on board the ship must see the signal," he muttered.

If the ship was captured he knew that his dearest scheme would be frustrated.

Jack had learnt from the native he captured, that Emily had been sent to the pirates' stronghold.

This was called the City of the Golden Towers.

The ship would enable Jack to sail to the island, on which the famous city was situated, and the rescue of Emily would be comparatively easy.

Besides this, the vessel would take Jack back to England, while Hunston would be left alone amongst the savages.

"I could gnaw my heart out with vexation," he said, almost crying with rage.

He stood by the fire piling on wood, and watching the progress of the boat towards the ship.

The morning had broken clear and serene; not a cloud obscured the magnificent disc of the yellow sun.

A refreshing breeze carried the boat over the water like a thing of life.

In his impatience, Jack had seized an oar, while Harvey had grasped another.

She flew through the water.

Monday looked after the sail, while Mr. Mole sat behind Ben Blunt, who handled the tiller.

The dangerous nature of the task they had undertaken prevented them from feeling any inclination to talk.

It seemed an age before they reached the ship, though the actual distance traversed was not more than five or six miles.

When they were within a few yards of the vessel, they saw dark forms on the deck.

"Ship ahoy!" cried a sailor.

"Lower your flag!" exclaimed Jack, dropping his oar and grasping his weapons.

"Who are you, and where do you hail from?" continued the mutineer.

"You know me, Bill Drake, don't you?" said Ben Blunt.

"Of course I do. What tack are you on now, Ben?" returned the one addressed as Blake.

"Sam Parsons is dead, and I've come to summon you to lay down your arms."

"Never!" replied Drake. "There's something wrong, lads. I see the signal on the shore; it's a caution. Take your boat away," he added, "or, by ——, we'll sink her!"

"Pour in a volley!" cried Jack. "Now, then, each of you cover your man and aim low. Are you ready? Fire!"

In a moment there was a succession of reports.

"Run her alongside, Ben, and then board her!" continued Jack.

"I'll stick to you," said Harvey to his friend.

"All right. Bet you a bob I'm on deck first, Dick," replied Jack.

Almost directly, the crew of the boat were clambering up the sides of the ship.

Whether the mutineers were disheartened or not, Jack did not know.

But they returned the fire in a half-hearted manner, which did not appear to do any damage.

With his pistols in his belt, and a knife between his teeth, Jack went up the ship's side, as if he were walking upstairs into his father's drawing-room.

Harvey was after him in a trice.

They saw four men on deck, two having fallen at the first discharge.

Jack having fired his pistol at one, rushed at the other with his dirk and ran it through his body.

Harvey made short work with another, and the fourth fell on his knees and begged for mercy.

"Shall I settle him?" asked Harvey.

"No, let the beggar live. Take away his arms, though," replied Jack. The mutineer gladly allowed himself to be disarmed, and then the victors looked round to see the extent of the damage.

By this time Monday had gained the deck, not being so active as the boys, who, of course, knew much better how to get on board a ship than he did.

"Oh, Mast' Jack!" cried Monday; "how him bleed!"

"Who?" asked Jack.

"You, sare; look, your face!"

Jack put up his hand and withdrew it covered with blood.

"By Jove!" he said; "I've copped it, somehow, though I didn't feel I was wounded. Is it much, Dick?"

Harvey approached to examine and said—

"It isn't deep, but it's a neat enough cut over the cheek bone. It's a cutlass wound. I saw one of the fellows make a swipe at you as you boarded."

"Tie something round it, will you?"

Taking a handkerehief off his neck, Harvey fastened it as well as he could round his friend's face.

"Hurrah," said Jack, "the ship's ours! Ben! Where's Ben?"

"Here, cap'n," replied the old sailor coming up the ship's side with difficulty. "I've got a bullet in the leg, but I wouldn't stop below."

"That's a pity, for we're short-handed already, and can't afford to let you go into the sick bay," said Jack.

Harvey had a look at the wound, and exclaimed—

"I'm surgeon's mate, Ben."

"Might have a worse, sir, and meaning no flattery to you," answered Ben."

The ball fortunately had not gone in very far, and Dick felt it by probing the wound with his finger.

"Can you plumb it, sir?" asked Ben.

"True as a die, Ben. Shut your mouth and keep still."

"Oh! That last poke seemed to touch up a muscle," cried Ben, wincing beneath the pain.

Harvey had one of those wonderful knives in his pocket, which are a cork-screw, penknife, stone-picker, bradawl, forceps, etc., all in one.

Opening the forceps, he, with great nerve and considerable skill, inserted the instrument in the wound, grappled the bullet, and drew it out.

"The Lord love you, sir," said Ben, joyfully. "Perhaps you've saved my life, leastways, my leg, which would have cankered without a doctor's help."

Harvey tore up part of his shirt and made bandages, which he tied round the wound.

"Now you lie still, my old sea-lion," he said. "You've got an uncommon bad leg, and we shall have you tied up in your hammock with a big shot at your feet, if you don't watch it."

Ben hobbled to the after-deck, and sat down on a carronade, knowing that Dick's advice was too good not to be followed.

The bodies of the mutineers were quickly thrown overboard by Monday, and the decks swabbed.

In a short time not even a blood-stain remained to show there had been an action.

Going up to Ben, Jack said—

"What's the name of the man whose life we spared? Will he join us?"

"Bouncer's his name, leastways, I never heard him called anything else," answered Ben; "and as to joining us, will a duck swim?"

"What do they call him Bouncer for?"

"'Cos he's the biggest out and outer at lying as ever had breath put into him," said Ben.

"Oh, that's it," exclaimed Jack, laughing.

"You mustn't believe anything that Bouncer tells you, 'cos he can't speak the truth even a little bit. He don't know how."

"Can we go to sea like this, Ben?" asked Jack.

"No, sir," answered the old sailor. "We couldn't work her if a storm came on. It would be a tempting of Providence, and I'd as soon sail on a Friday."

"Then what's the good of the vessel?" asked Jack in a tone of disappointment.

"Might man her with niggers, sir."

"Niggers? Natives you mean."

"Yes," replied Ben. "I've seen Lascars do their duty when they've been well larruped with a rope's end. But you can't do nothing with them with kindness."

"Are they lazy?"

"Ain't they?" said Ben. "I've seen 'em—a score or more—sleeping on deck of a night, cuddled up in each other's arms, all the world like monkeys, and that's what they'd like to do always—eat and drink and sleep; but these here niggers may be a chalk better."

"I'll consider what's to be done, Ben. Let Harvey help you below. Turn into your old bunk. You must take care of yourself."

"Thank'ee, sir. I shall know little rest though till I can take my place again by your side," answered the sailor.

"Where's Mole?" said Jack, as Harvey and Ben disappeared.

In the excitement of the moment he had forgotten all about Mr. Mole, and he now looked anxiously round for him.

The proprietor of a tea-garden in China was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER XVII.

HUNSTON IN DANGER.

THE delight of Harkaway at having so boldly and gallantly captured the beautiful little ship "Sea-horse" was unbounded.

He had many difficulties yet to contend with; but having possession of the vessel gave him hopes of sailing to the mysterious city where Emily had been sent.

Then, having rescued her, he could up anchor and sail for England.

The very thought of his home and all his friends, who no doubt, for his long silence, were mourning him as dead, sent him wild with joy.

He forgot the pain of his wound, which was beginning to stiffen.

He forgot all the difficulties he had to encounter, and had it not been for his anxiety on Mr. Mole's account, he would have sunk into a charming reverie.

Monday came up at this moment, and he said—

"Have you seen Mr. Mole? I am afraid he is hurt,

and I wouldn't lose Mole for the world. We should have no fun without him."

Monday grinned.

"Mist' Mole all right, sare," he replied.

"Is he? How do you know that?" asked Jack, much relieved.

"Monday saw him lower the sail in the boat, and creep under um, sare."

"He's in the boat, then?"

"Yes, sare."

Jack looked over the side, and saw the boat drifting astern.

"Drop into the water, and swim to her," he exclaimed, "or she'll get into a current and go in shore. He'll never work her himself."

Monday had no superfluous clothing, and quickly dropped into the sea, swimming like a fish towards the boat.

He looked under the sail, but saw no one.

"Him gone," he exclaimed.

"Gone! Pull the boat in, and make fast the painter to the ship," answered Jack, whose presence of mind never failed him.

He had got into the habit now of giving orders, and commanded as if he had been born to it.

In a short time Monday worked the boat back, moored her, and came on deck, his dusky skin glistening in the sun after his immersion.

"Now, where's Mole?" said Jack.

"Monday saw him, sare, creep under the sail when we began to fire."

"Perhaps he's on board, and we have missed him. Come below."

Jack went down the hatch, and entered the captain's cabin.

Here to his surprise, was Mr. Mole.

On the floor lay a man, very much the worse for liquor, and Mr. Mole had put his foot on his neck.

Bottles of various kinds, containing spirits and wines, were displayed on the table.

Mr. Mole had been trying each of them, and held a glass of something red in his hand, which he was sipping with great gusto.

"How did you get here, sir?" asked Jack. "We thought you had come to grief."

"Harkaway," answered Mr. Mole, "I have subjugated this Philistine. Look at him!"

"I can see him, sir."

"Have I not put my foot on his neck?"

"But how did you get into this stateroom?" persisted Jack.

"You shall hear. First of all, try a glass of this liquor. I know not its name, but of a verity, Harkaway, it is comforting to the inner man."

"Don't mind if I do, sir. I got a nasty knock on the head, and don't feel over and above bobbish," replied Jack.

They drank, Mr. Mole raising his glass to his mouth with an unsteady hand, and saying—

"When the boat struck against the side of this goodly ship I saw a port-hole, Harkaway."

"Yes, sir."

"My first impulse was to follow you on deck, but on reflection, I decided not to do so. I crept through the port-hole, and entered this cabin."

"Where you found the liquor, sir," said Jack.

"No, Harkaway, not so," replied Mr. Mole. "Where I found this truculent mutineer. We fought for more than ten minutes, and at last I conquered him."

"You haven't got a scratch, sir. That's lucky, after a ten-minutes' tussle."

"I don't show my wounds like some people. If I am thrust through the thigh with a murderous sort of knife, I don't go and proclaim it on the housetops, not I, Harkaway,"

"Well, I'm glad to see you so well as you are, sir," replied Jack. "You'll excuse me for a time, as I have affairs to attend to."

"Can I help you? If so, command Isaac Mole."

"You must come on deck, sir. I must keep this cabin shut up."

"Shut up the cabin?" said Mr. Mole, in dismay.

"Yes; this is my den in the future. I'm captain, sir, and you shall be one of my lieutenants."

"This is reversing the order of things, Harkaway. Am I not entitled by my age and experience to be the

leader? I will not quit this cabin at present, I protest against it; but I will drink your health nevertheless."

While he was speaking he slipped off his chair, and fell stretched on the floor.

"Let him be, sare," said Monday. "Him right enough now."

"You black beast!" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "I will teach you how to respect your pastors and masters when I am better. Just now I feel sleepy. My exertions in the battle have made me drowsy. You can go and play."

A benignant smile overspread his countenance, and Jack and Monday left the cabin.

Going on deck again, they met Harvey.

"Hullo, Jack!" said Harvey, "did you ever see a whale?"

"No, I never, never saw a whale, but I've just seen a Mole," replied Jack.

"Where?"

"In the cabin—tight."

"Well, he's happy. I thought he was potted. Shouldn't like to lose old Mole. He isn't a bad sort, and taught our young ideas, you know."

"So he did. I like Mole. He keeps us alive."

"Well, what's the next move?" said Harvey.

"Blest if I know; I'm cornered," answered Jack. "I must have a little while to rest and think. There's Mole tight, Ben Blunt wounded, and I'm dead beat."

"You're wounded too."

"It isn't much, though I must own I want rest," said Jack.

"Have it then. Monday and I will keep watch. There are too small cannons on deck, which I suppose the crew had to protect them against the Malay pirates. We will keep them loaded, and if the mutineers wake up and try to board us, we will sink them."

"By the way, Monday," asked Jack, "how long will the fellows be before the drug works off?"

"They wide 'wake enough now, sare," replied Monday.

"How do you know?"

"You look, sare. See um all dance about; and, look, they got Mast' Hunston!"

"I'll be hanged if I can see them. Your eyes are sharper than mine," replied Jack.

"Get a glass, Monday?" said Harvey. "We have one somewhere."

Monday saw one lying on the deck, and handed it to Jack.

He put the telescope to his eye, and took a steady view of the opposite shore.

"By Jove!" he said. "Monday's right. The fellows are all up, and bustling about like bees."

"Have they got Hunston?" asked Harvey.

"Yes; they are binding a fellow who looks like Hunston."

"Him Mast' Hunston, sure enough," said Monday. "Me never forget um face."

"What are they going to do with him?" continued Harvey.

"Jiggered if I know," answered Jack. "They've got him safe. There is something on, but what it is, I can't make out for the life of me."

"I expect he's had a row with the mutineers," said Harvey; "but he'll square it with them, no doubt. It isn't worth while bothering about him."

"Not much," replied Jack.

He dropped the glass, and as he did so, Bouncer, who had been neglected in the confusion came up.

"Beg pardon, captain," he said.

"What do you want? Oh, you are the prisoner," replied Jack.

"Yes, sir, and I want to know what you're going to do with me."

"Look here, Mr. Bouncer," said Jack; "the ship is ours now, and we mean to take very good care she shall remain ours. If you like to become one of our crew, we'll take you to England with us, and say nothing about the mutiny."

"That's generous, sir," replied Bouncer, "though, to tell you the truth, I was dead against the rising from the first, and it was through me that Ben Blunt's life was saved."

Jack did not quite believe this, for he remembered what Ben had said about Bouncer's lying powers.

"You'll be short-handed, sir," continued Bouncer. "There's only yourselves, me, and Geary, who's been drunk in the captain's cabin for the last two days."

"You'll have to work double tides, then," said Jack; "but we mean to get some niggers to ship with us."

"From one of the islands?"

"Yes; say a dozen or so, and they can be brought to their homes by the next ship that comes out this way. I'll see about that."

"Then I'd better set about my duty, sir," exclaimed Bouncer; "for although I say it who shouldn't, there isn't a better fo'castle hand than I am."

"No treachery, mind, Mr. Bouncer," said Jack. "If I see the least symptom of an inclination on your part to join your old friends, I'll shoot you like a seagull."

"No fear, sir. I'm glad to be under a proper cap'n again. When do you sail?"

"Not yet. We must wait till that drunken hound in the cabin is sober, and Ben Blunt can get about and give us a hand. You, I, Harvey, and Monday, with Mr. Mole thrown in, are not sufficient to work the ship."

"That's the crew, is it, sir? Four men and a black—five all told."

"That's all—five men, if you like to call Harvey and I men."

"Ah, I could spin you a yarn, sir," said Bouncer, "of how I and another chap crossed the Atlantic, when we wasn't fourteen years old, in a cockle-shell of thirty tons. It isn't the years, it's the spirit that makes a man."

"There is something in that," replied Jack; "and now keep a good look-out. Those two small cannons are loaded. If the mutineers come near us in their boats depress the muzzles and fire low, and we shall sink the lot of them."

Having given some trifling orders to Harvey and Monday, Jack took up the glass again and reconnoitred the shore.

Hunston was certainly in trouble.

But what about?

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RAGE OF THE MUTINEERS.

To explain the peculiar position into which Hunston had fallen, we must return to the mutineers.

The drug which had been given them, though quick in its action, was not lasting in its effects.

In a few hours they had slept off the lethargy which had overtaken them.

Jimmy Clark, being a man of strong constitution, was the first to return to his senses.

He was followed by the rest of his companions, one by one.

They all awoke somewhat dizzy and drowsy, rubbing their eyes and stretching their limbs.

Hunston no sooner saw they were getting about again, than he left the signal fire and came towards them.

"What's the meaning of this, and where are your late friends?" asked Jimmy.

"They've been one too many for you, curse them!" replied Hunston.

"How's that; and why did you light the signal?"

"To give those on board warning that there was danger."

"What danger?" asked the mutineer.

"You've had some stuff put in your grog," said Hunston, "which sent you all off to sleep."

"Hang me, if I didn't think as much."

"While you slept, the party, under Jack Harkaway, sailed to the ship, attacked, and captured it. I heard the firing, and though I lighted the signal, it did not save the vessel."

The mutineers looked blankly at one another.

"Is this true?" cried Jimmy fiercely.

"Judge for yourself," replied Hunston. "Look, they are lowering the black flag you hoisted, and running up the Union Jack."

"So they are. It's a case, and Ben Blunt has us in the palm of his hand. He'll send one of Her Majesty's cruisers after us, and we shall be shot or hanged."

The dismay of the mutineers increased.

"Death is better than being left on this island," said one.

Turning savagely to Hunston, and eyeing him suspiciously, Jimmy Clark exclaimed—

"It strikes me, my hearty, that you've had a hand in this."

"I?" repeated Hunston.

"Yes, you; they used to be your friends. How is it you were not drugged with the rest of us?"

"Because I wouldn't drink with them."

"That be blowed for a yarn. Catch an old sailor refusing his allowance, when it's offered him," said Jimmy.

"Look here," replied Hunston, growing alarmed at the threatening looks which were bent upon him from all sides.

"Well?" said the mutineer, sullenly.

"If I'd stood in with them, shouldn't I have gone off in the boat with them, and not have stopped here with you?"

This argument did not convince Jimmy.

"Not you. There is some dodge on. You didn't expect us to wake up so soon, and meant to have joined them later. If they ain't waiting for you, why don't they set sail at once?"

"Look 'ee here," said a hairy, rough-looking mutineer, "you see the smoke from that fire's a-blowing right into the cave, ain't it?"

"Yes, it be so," replied Jimmy.

"Well, then, it's my idea he meant to have dragged all our bodies in there and have suffocated us right off, only we come to a sight too quick for him."

This unlikely suggestion was eagerly caught at by the mutineers, and fully believed in.

Knives leaped from sheaths and flashed in the sunlight.

More than one pistol was levelled at Hunston's head, and his life with these ferocious men did not seem worth a minute's purchase.

Jimmy now interfered.

"Put up your shooting-irons, lads," he exclaimed. "There is one comfort, we've got the traitor."

"Kill him! kill him!" cried a chorus of voices.

"Not yet. Seize him and bind his arms, so as he shan't slip his cable."

A dozen willing hands fell upon Hunston, and securely bound his hands behind his back.

This was what Jack had observed from the deck of the "Sea-horse."

It was this confusion which had puzzled him.

"Now, my lads, let's have a bit of a palaver," said Jimmy.

The mutineers crowded round their leader in a circle.

Hunston was sitting on the ground, looking sullen and dejected.

"It was this chap," continued Jimmy, pointing to Hunston, "who got us to come here to attack Ben Blunt, wasn't it?"

"That's right enough."

"Well, Sam Parsons got killed, and I always thought there was foul play about that, which was all of a piece with the rest."

"Ben Blunt never could have beat Sam Parsons if there wasn't something quizzy a-going on," remarked a mutineer.

"So I say," remarked Jimmy; "and it's all bits of the same plot. Well, we gets drugged, doesn't us?"

"Sure," replied the men.

"Then, while we's asleep, Ben and his mates goes and takes our ship. Now what I say is that this Hunston is at the bottom of it all. He's helped his friends, and all what's happened is all along of him."

"Don't I tell you that I hate Harkaway and all his companions like poison?" exclaimed Hunston.

"What you say don't matter much. It ain't of no account," answered Jimmy.

"Won't you listen to reason?" continued Hunston. "A child, if he'd look at the facts fairly, could see that I've had nothing to do with it."

"Look here," said the mutineer, "you may jaw for a month, but you won't alter our opinion. We've dropped anchor at that idea, and we shall ride at it, shan't us, lads?"

There was a noisy chorus of assent.

"Now, you've done a deal for your pals, and they ought to do summat for you," persisted Jimmy.

"They won't do anything for me," replied Hunston, "so it is no use your thinking of it."

"We'll try them. I want that ship. We're treed so long as we ain't got our ship, and I don't know as we should do much good by attacking of her now she's well looked arter."

"Why not? You're four to one."

"Maybe; but Ben Blunt and his friends are wide awake, they are, not like our two scoundrels Bouncer and Geary, and the others, who must have got blazing drunk, and kept no watch."

"You've got two boats. Go and attack the ship. I'll lead the attack," Hunston suggested.

"No, thank you; I've got a better dodge than that. You'd go over to the enemy. I know you. Wanted to smother us all in the cave, didn't you?"

Hunston groaned at the pig-headed and ignorant obstinacy of the man.

"No, my lads," Jimmy went on; "we won't attack the ship to be sent to the bottom by the cannon, not us. We'll send a flag of truce, and tell who ever's captain of the 'Sea-horse' that if the ship isn't given up in twelve hours, we'll hang this Hunston on a tree in sight of his pals."

There was a roar of assent to this proposition.

"Jimmy can do it. He's a born lawyer all over," said one of the mutineers named Phillips.

"Are we sailing on the right tack?" asked Jimmy, much pleased with the applause he received.

"That's right," replied Phillips. "Let Hunston write a bit of a note—we've got pencil and paper among us—and then two of us will go in the boat with a flag of truce and let 'em think it over."

"It must be put strong and simple to them," said another mutineer.

"You leave that to me, and don't attempt to teach your betters," exclaimed Jimmy. "It's this way; they give up the ship in twelve hours, or we put a noose round their friend Hunston's neck, and hang him up to the nearest tree."

"But I'm not their friend," said Hunston.

"Go along, and tell that to the marines," replied Jimmy, derisively.

"We're enemies. We hate one another, and I've been trying to kill the whole of them this ever so long. My life doesn't matter a rush to them."

"It won't do, governor," said Jimmy. "We're able-bodied seamen, and it won't wash."

"All right; you're a parcel of fools, and must do as you like, I suppose," exclaimed Hunston, with a sigh of resignation.

He saw it was useless to talk to them.

They fancied he was a traitor to them, and a friend of Ben Blunt and Harkaway, which was quite enough for them.

Paper and pencil were produced, and handed to Hunston.

"Now, then, write for your life; that's what you've got to do."

Write to Harkaway to save his life!

What a strange turn events had taken since Jack was Hunston's captive in Palembang, and a high gallows had been erected especially for him.

Hunston had some spirit and pride left in him, and he hesitated before he put pencil to paper.

He felt it would be no use.

It would be an unnecessary humiliation.

Throwing the pencil down, he said—

"Write yourselves! I'll be hanged if I lower myself by writing to Jack, not even to beg my life."

The mutineers regarded him with astonishment.

CHAPTER XIX.

TWELVE HOURS ONLY.

THE scene was a striking one.

Hunston's arms had been unbound to permit him to write, and an empty biscuit cask had been rolled before him, upon which the sheet of rough paper was placed.

Around him were gathered the picturesquely-attired mutineers, with their savage faces sunburnt and swarthy.

On one side was a cave, situated at the base of a rocky ledge, which stretched for some distance along the shore.

Behind arose a vast forest, filled with all the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics.

In front a sandy plateau swept down to the blue, curly waves of the sea, which, agitated by a faint breeze swept in gently eddying circles, flecked with foam.

"Won't you write?" asked Jimmy Clark, angrily.

"No; I have told you I won't," replied Hunston.

"Perhaps we can find a way of persuading you, my bantam cock."

"What's the good of bullying me?" Hunston said. "Can't you write yourself? You seem to have some education."

"I can write, and read, too, for that matter; not that either accomplishment's of much use to a sailor. But

give us hold of the pencil, I don't want to be nasty," said Jimmy.

He took up the pencil, and hastily wrote—

"To Ben Blunt, and those on board the 'Sea-horse' with him.

"Look here, old mate, you've been and gone and done it, and we ain't a-going to stand it, that's flat.

"We've got your friend Hunston—leastaways he's a friend of the chap they calls Jack Harkaway, who's at the bottom of this fakement.

"Now this is the size of it.

"If so be as you don't part with the ship in twelve hours from the time of getting this writing, we shall string up Hunston.

"That means hanging of him.

"We give you twelve hours to think it over.

"Let us have our ship, and we'll shake hands and cry quits.

"Your lot shall have this island, which we'll vacu—cu——"

"I say, how do you spell 'vacuate?" asked Jimmy.

Hunston told him.

"There may be a 'e' at the end," said Jimmy; "I don't say there isn't, but blow me if there's one at the beginning, and blame me if I put one. It's 'vacuate, ain't it? Well, then, how can you put a 'e' at the top. Go on. It's foolishness. You'll tell me next I ain't been to school at all."

"Put it as you like," replied Hunston.

"Which will be, ''vacuate the island,'" continued Jimmy, "and say no more about it, though that drugging business was a dirty bit, and no flies.

"So give up the ship, and cry a go, or we'll hang this this cur, Hunston.

"So no more from yours at present, and a hoping it leaves you.

"JIM CLARK."

"Will that do, lads?" said Jim, reading it out with conscious pride.

The mutineers said it was beautiful, and evidently regarded the composition as the highest style of art.

"Now, Phillips, my man, you and me will sail over to the old tub, and deliver this 'ere letter," continued Jimmy.

Hunston was again bound, and the mutineers, after seeing their companions start, began to busy themselves in preparing their breakfast.

In the cave they found a variety of articles, abandoned by Jack and his party, which came in very handy.

Hunston watched the boat sail off with a dogged look.

He did not expect any mercy from Jack, and thought that the attempt to get back the ship by threatening his own life would be a failure.

On all occasions he had treated Harkaway and Harvey, too, so infamously that he fancied they would show more than Christian forgiveness if they raised a hand in his defence.

"I'm a bad lot," he muttered. "I'm a thorn in their side, and the sooner I'm dead and gone the better for them. What do they care for me?"

The mutineers left him to himself, taking no notice of him.

He could not escape; that was all they cared about.

Hunston evidently believed his end was approaching.

No wonder he was sullen and silent.

Meanwhile the boat was on its way to the "Sea-horse."

Jack saw it long before it came near, and seeing only two men in it, did not feel much alarmed.

He called Harvey to his side, and pointed it out.

"What shall we do?" he asked.

"Oh, we needn't funk," replied Harvey. "They've come to remonstrate with us, perhaps."

A white flag was run up to the top of the little mast, and Jack cried—

"Lay to!"

The mutineers hauled down their sail, and hove to.

"We're unarmed," cried Jimmy Clark, "and have brought you a letter, sir."

"Come on board then," replied Jack. "You, I mean the other fellow, can stay in the boat."

The mutineer approached nearer, and in a few minutes Jimmy was on deck.

"I'm the bearer of a letter sir," he said; "and come with a flag of truce, so of course you won't do anything

to me. More by token that we've got your friend hard and fast."

"What friend?"

"Him they call Hunston."

"He's no friend of ours, my good fellow," said Jack. "You never made a greater mistake in your life."

"I thought you would say so," exclaimed Jimmy. "Howsomever, read that bit of writing."

Jack took the scrawl, and with difficulty made himself master of its contents.

"Is this a dodge?" he asked.

"What do you mean, sir?" inquired Jimmy.

"Is this a dodge of Hunston's or are you really going to hang him because you think he has betrayed you and is a friend of ours?"

"Wish I may die, cappen," answered Jimmy, "if every word of that letter isn't gospel truth."

"You mean to hang Hunston, if we don't give up this ship in twelve hours?"

"That's it, sir."

"And you give me twelve hours to decide?"

"Not a minute more. If we don't hear from you then, up he goes."

"Very well," said Jack. "I can't give you an answer off-hand, but I'll think the matter over."

The mutineer inquired after his comrades, and declared that he was sorry Geary and Bouncer were alive as they deserved killing with the others, because they had kept such a bad look-out.

"You ought never to have had this ship," he said.

"But we've got it, my friend," answered Jack.

"I know that. Well, sir, we'll expect your answer, and if you'll give us a glass of grog——"

"Not a drop. You're a mutinous dog and I'll have nothing further to say to you," interrupted Jack.

"But sir——"

"Be off, or I'll help you," said Jack, who was indignant with the mutineers, and did not care to take the trouble to speak civilly to any of them.

Jimmy descended the side, and the sail of the boat was soon bellying to the breeze, as he returned to his companions.

"Dick!" cried Harkaway.

"Here!" replied Harvey, who had been standing at a respectful distance, and had not heard what passed.

"Come below; we must hold a council of war."

"All right. Lead on," said Harvey.

They went into the captain's cabin.

Monday remained on deck with Bouncer.

Ben Blunt was in a hammock.

Geary had been removed, and was trying to get sober, while Mr. Mole was drinking some fine Madeira he had found in a locker, and was nibbling a ship's biscuit.

"Ah! you have come at last, Harkaway," he said. "That is my lunch. Have some lunch."

"What is it, sir?"

"Merely a biscuit and a glass of wine. Excellent Madeira. Try a glass."

Both Harvey and Jack complied with his request, and had some lunch.

"Comfortable quarters these, Harkaway. When do we sail?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Not for a day or two, sir," replied Jack.

"Ah, well! I leave all those things to you. Of course you'll put me in the way of getting to China. I must see after my tea-garden."

"Sell it, sir. We shall not get much further up the China Sea."

"I should like to see it. I must see my tea-garden, and shan't die happy if I don't," exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"What are you going to do with your wives, sir?" inquired Harvey.

"Wives! ah! Great bother wives; but I've given them the slip, eh! Shouldn't mind Alfura so much, but Ambonia is—a—what shall I say?"

"A teazer, sir."

"She's worse than that, Harvey. She's a millstone round a man's neck. What a lovely corpse she would make, to be sure."

"I'm ashamed of you, sir," said Jack. "You don't manage her rightly, but you'll have an opportunity of making up for your bad behaviour, as we are going to Limbi."

"Going—to—Limbi!" said Mr. Mole, in horrified amazement.

"Must go."

"What for?"

"Haven't got our full complement of hands. Want niggers to make up the crew," replied Jack.

"Let me work. Let me do the work of a common seaman. I will indeed; but don't, for the love of Heaven, go to Limbi."

"Must," said Jack.

"Well, then, say I'm dead. Tell them I fell fighting bravely against the Pisangs. Tell them anything, only don't give me up to the furies," supplicated Mr. Mole.

"We'll see what can be done for you, sir," replied Jack. "By the way, did you hear the news Monday brought from Limbi?"

"That my wives meant to come after me?"

"No, not that. Mrs. Mole Number One expects to become a mother."

"Oh, Lord!" cried Mole, pressing his hand to his head.

"And Mrs. Mole Number Two also has an expectation of the same sort, but isn't quite sure."

"The Lord be good to me! Two Little Isaacs! Oh, Lord! what shall I do? Two little Isaac Moles, with a prospect of more," said the wretched man.

"It's nice to be a father, sir," remarked Harvey.

"Not when they're niggers; the children, I mean. No, Harvey, I cannot look forward to such a prospect with an equal mind."

"Poor little innocents. What have they done? If you don't like kids, sir——"

"Harvey, I beg of you to refrain from any indulgence in unseemly mirth on my account. I will not put up with it."

Harvey sang—

> "One little Isaac,
> Two little Isaacs,
> Three little Isaac Moles.

You can do it, sir. Perhaps Ambonia will have twins."

"Do you want to drive me mad?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Shut up, Dick; I want to talk about business?" cried Jack.

"Ah! business!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, rubbing his hands, and taking another glass of wine. "That's more in my way. I hate and abominate chaff. What is the business may I ask?"

"The mutineers fancy Hunston has betrayed them, and mean to hang him in twelve hours if we don't give up the ship," replied Jack.

Both Harvey and Mr. Mole received this news without showing any signs of astonishment or regret.

They did not seem to care whether Hunston lived or died.

Possible of the two they would have preferred him dead.

CHAPTER XX.

JACK'S GENEROSITY.

"LET them hang him," said Mr. Mole.

"So I say," remarked Harvey. "He's no good. It will save us the trouble of settling his hash some day."

"Give up the ship and these comfortable quarters, with the chance of getting to China or home again?" continued Mr. Mole. "We're not candidates for Colney Hatch lunatic asylum yet."

"Nor Hanwell either," replied Harvey. "What do you say, Jack?"

"I don't see the force of giving up the ship," answered Jack, "and yet I don't like to leave Hunston to his fate."

"Has he ever shown you any kindness?" said Harvey.

"Was he not always your determined enemy at school, and has he not been so since," said Mr. Mole.

"That is true; but I shouldn't like to see an old schoolfellow hanged before my eyes, as I may say."

"The sentiment does more honour to your heart than head, Harkaway," Mr. Mole said. "If I were you I should not trouble about the scoundrel."

"But I shall, sir. You and I are two different people, and I won't leave Hunston in the hands of the mutineers."

"Dear, dear," said Mr. Mole. "This is an unfortunate determination of yours. Here have we fought valiantly for the ship, and——"

"I'm not going to give up the ship."

"Oh! that's a different thing. What is it you propose to do, then?" Mr. Mole said, much relieved.

"I shall go ashore, and have a shy at the mutineers. By myself, if no one has the pluck to go with me."

"Really I must decline the challenge," Mr. Mole replied. "The fatigues of this morning's battle have been too much for me. It was mainly owing to me that the ship was captured. Had I not gone through the porthole, and settled the man down below, I verily believe he would have fired the magazine, and then what would have become of you who were struggling on deck?"

Jack looked at Harvey, who saw the glance and comprehended it, but he preserved silence.

"Won't you lend a hand, Dick, to save an old schoolfellow?" urged Jack.

"I'll tell you what it is," replied Harvey; "if it had been anybody but Hunston, I would not have hesitated a moment, but——"

He paused.

"Well Dick?" said Jack, calmly.

"It seems to me to be folly to risk our own lives to save his."

"He's got friends, Dick. He's got a mother and father, and brothers and sisters. Won't they like to see him again, bad as he is. Think of his poor mother," said Jack.

"I wish you wouldn't be so eloquent," replied Harvey. "I shall have to give in whether I like it or not, if you go on like that."

"He's young, Dick, not above a year or two older than we are, and he's led a wicked life, and done—what is it we say at church, Mr. Mole?"

"'Those things which we ought not to have done,' Harkaway. Is that what you mean?"

"That's it, sir. Well, Dick, he's got sins to repent, and you know he might turn out a decent fellow after all."

"Don't walk into my affections like that, Jack," said Harvey.

"But I must and will."

"What do you want me to do?"

"To come and save Hunston."

"How?"

"It's a time to forget his faults," said Jack. "We must put those on one side."

"I don't know at present. We've got twelve hours to

do it in. Only twelve hours. Just one day. It doesn't seem long, though it's time enough to save a man's life in."

Still Harvey was irresolute.

"Would it look well to go home and see Mr. Crawcour, and Collinson, and Mr. Stonor, and all our own friends, and tell them that we left Hunston to be hanged before our eyes, when we might have raised a hand to save him? Dick, old boy, you're not showing your proper form, you're not, indeed."

"You've licked, Jack," cried Harvey, jumping up. "I didn't think anyone could have persuaded me to go across the street for Hunston, but you've done it."

"You'll come?"

"Rather. I'm with you, Jack, sink or swim. They shan't say we left an old schoolfellow in the lurch."

"He had me beaten with the bamboos," remarked Harvey, "till I thought my back was being skinned."

"And he tried to hang me twice over. Never mind," replied Jack, "we'll show them all that we've got some British pluck left, and we'll save him, or——"

He paused.

"Or what, my very impulsive young friend?" asked Mr. Mole, with a cynical smile.

"Turn up our toes, sir," replied Jack.

"What may that mean?"

"Croak, sir. Get ready for your six feet of polished elm or oak, if your family can afford the luxury."

"You should not joke about such subjects, Harkaway. It is wrong. I trust neither you nor Harvey will want a coffin; but, if you should, depend upon it, I will do the best I can, taking into consideration the slender resources of the country."

"Well," said Jack; "that's cool."

"I trust I am always cool in the hour of danger, Harkaway," replied Mr. Mole.

"Well, sir, laughing's better than crying, and I daresay we shall hit upon a dodge of rescuing Hunston without losing our lives."

"Let us hope so."

Jack was rather annoyed with Mr. Mole for the selfish way in which he spoke, and, rising, beckoned to Harvey.

"Come on deck, Dick," he said.

"Are you going?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Yes, we are going."

"You leave me with my friend," said Mr. Mole, playfully tapping the wine-bottle.

"Take care of it, sir. It's the only friend you've got, and he won't turn out a real one," replied Jack.

Directly he had said this, he was sorry for it.

Mr. Mole got up, and running after Jack, caught him close to the entrance to the cabin.

He looked hurt, and really felt hurt, for it was the first time either of the boys had said anything unkind to him, or noticed his growing weakness for the bottle.

"Harkaway," he exclaimed, touching his shoulder.

"Well, sir," replied Jack.

"You said something, which I thought very unkind, a moment ago. Did you mean it?"

Jack's heart was in his mouth in a moment.

"No, sir, I didn't," he replied; "and I'm very sorry I said it. Will you forgive me?"

"Our lot," said Mr. Mole, "is cast in a foreign land, and we are in the midst of danger. I may have drunk too much, Harkaway; perhaps I have——"

"No, sir——"

"I'm not blind to my own faults, but it cuts me to the quick to be ridiculed by my own pupils, my dear friends, for I love you both as my own children."

"I believe you do, sir," replied Jack.

"You must not think I am a silly old man," continued Mr. Mole. "Out here I may indulge too much occasionally, but why shouldn't I? Look at the surrounding circumstances. What are they?"

"Niggers and sea, sir," replied Harvey.

"With occasional snakes and mutineers," said Mr. Mole. "But seriously, my dear boys, do not say anything rude to me again. I cannot bear it. Believe me, that however foolish I may seem to you occasionally, I do value your good opinion, most highly. I do, indeed."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I didn't mean anything. I didn't want to be cheeky," said Jack.

"And I'll say more, Harkaway, now I'm on the subject," Mr. Mole went on. "I admire the courage you have displayed under the most trying circumstances. It's been a source of pride and wonder to me."

"Don't butter me too much, sir; I can't lend you half-a-crown if you want it," replied Jack, smiling.

"No, no; you must not make fun of what I say. I do my best, but I cannot equal you. However, we are not of an age, and youth is always ardent."

"That's it, sir," exclaimed Jack. "Please accept my apology for hurting your feelings. I wouldn't have done it for a fiver. Will you forgive me?"

"Forgive you, Harkaway? There's my hand."

Jack took it, and grasped it heartily.

"Now we're friends, sir," he said.

"Yes, Harkaway."

"And you're perfectly satisfied?"

"Perfectly. God bless you! No one shall say that Isaac Mole ever bore malice, but I wouldn't lose the esteem of you two boys for anything. Remember that, and if I do say anything foolish, try and think well of me."

"I assure you, Mr. Mole," said Jack, "that we have a strong regard for you, and if we leave you now it is because we have business to attend to."

With this assurance Mr. Mole rested satisfied, and the boys went on deck.

"Well, Jack," exclaimed Harvey, "what's the little game now?"

"I don't know, I'm cornered," replied Jack.

"About Hunston, I mean."

"I know what you mean, well enough," Jack exclaimed. "But how to get him out of the hands of those blessed mutineers is more than your humble servant, Jack Harkaway, can tell."

Harvey looked puzzled, and they were both silent for some little time.

CHAPTER XXI.

JACK DOES HIS BEST FOR HIS OLD ENEMY.

It was some time before Jack could hit upon a plan for being of service to Hunston.

That he should not die if he could help it, he determined.

At the same time he was equally firmly resolved that he would not give up the ship to the mutineers.

As the vessel was so short-handed, he could not take any one but Harvey with him.

We have already spoken of the two small cannon they had on board.

Looking at one of these, Jack said—

"I think I know how to do it, Dick."

"How?" asked Harvey, "I've had my thinking-cap on for a long while, and can't hit upon any dodge which comes within a mile of the proper thing."

"Suppose we put one of these cannon on board the boat, load it up to the muzzle, take a slow match with us, sail in to the shore, and when we get within range of the mutineers let them have it hot and strong."

"That will do, if they let us get near enough," said Harvey.

"The cannon," replied Jack, "will carry farther than their rifles, so that we shall not be in danger."

"What if Hunston is in the line of fire?"

"He isn't at present. I have been looking through the glass, and he is tied to a tree on the left. The tree, perhaps, to which they mean to hang him."

"What are the mutineers doing?"

"Just what might have been expected, drinking and gambling. They have one or two packs of cards and seem greatly excited. Shall we try the plan?"

"If you like. It's better than nothing," answered Harvey.

"At once, or wait for night?"

"Oh, at once. I hate waiting," said Harvey.

"All right. Send Bouncer aft, with Monday. We will sling the gun into the boat, and get ready," exclaimed Jack.

It did not take long to put the little gun in the bows.

They loaded it nearly up to the muzzle with bullets, slugs, and pieces of old iron.

With them they took a bag of similar ammunition, so as to be ready for a second discharge.

Over the gun they threw a bit of old bunting, to prevent the mutineers seeing it and having their suspicions aroused.

"Is it all ready?"

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Bouncer.

"Jump in, Dick."

Harvey took his place in the stern and Jack followed him.

"Going to give them pepper, sir?" said Bouncer, smiling grimly as he regarded these warlike preparations, which were intended for his old comrades.

"I think I'm justified in doing so," replied Jack. "They are murderers, for they killed the officers of their ship, and are consequently out of the pale of the law."

"That's right enough, sir."

"Therefore," continued Jack, "in dealing with them I need not follow the rules of civilised warfare. If I can shoot them like dogs, they deserve it, for they'd cut our throats without the least compunction, if they got the chance."

"So they would. I can't say much for them," replied Bouncer; "and I did all I could to stop the mutiny, though what is one against a dozen or more?"

"Shove her off, Dick," said Jack, who had not much faith in Bouncer's hypocritical assertions of innocence.

The boat, by dint of successive tacks, made for the shore.

As they got nearer they clearly distinguished Hunston bound to a large palm-tree on the left of the cave.

He looked very miserable.

The mutineers were gambling and quarrelling, but they desisted when they saw the boat.

They thought that Jack was coming to make terms with them, and did not apprehend an attack.

"Lie down in the bows, Dick, and get the match ready," whispered Jack.

Harvey did so, and Jack lowered the sail when they were within what he judged to be a proper distance.

Holding the tiller, he kept the nose of the boat well in front, so that Harvey might point the gun without any difficulty and in such a manner that it might do good execution.

"Ahoy, there! Ahoy," exclaimed Jimmy Clark, who was in the centre of his companions.

"What cheer?" replied Jack, putting his hand to his mouth to make a speaking-trumpet.

"Are you come to give up the ship?"

"Speak louder ; I can't hear," said Jack, pretending he could not distinguish what was said.

"Do you agree to our terms?" continued Jimmy.

Jack bent down.

"Are you ready, Dick?" he asked.

"Half a minute," replied Harvey.

"They're all in a heap. Cover them well, and fire as soon as you can. Remember, all depends upon the first fire. They will scatter and shelter if we don't chaw them up."

"I've got a message for you," said Jack aloud.

"What is it? Let's have it," replied the mutineer.

"Look out then, it's coming. Now, Dick," he added, "aim low, and shoot straight."

The mutineers, numbering a dozen or fourteen, were grouped together.

They were not at all prepared for the sort of message Jack was going to send them.

Only a few of them thought it advisable to stand to their arms.

Suddenly a little tongue of flame shot up in the air, as Harvey applied the lighted match.

Then there was a puff of smoke and a sullen roar.

The next moment terrible shrieks rent the air, and more than half the number of the mutineers fell to the ground mortally wounded.

The others were so panic-stricken that they took to their heels, and ran for their lives.

Jack hoisted the sail, and saying, "Stand in," grasped the tiller again, and sent the boat rolling towards the land.

Harvey held a loaded rifle in his hand, and was prepared to pick off any of the survivors who showed themselves.

"Mind the boat as well as you can, Dick, and cover me while I go ashore," exclaimed Jack.

"Aye, aye!" replied Harvey.

Setting his teeth firmly together, Jack dashed into the sea as soon as the boat grounded.

In one hand he held a pistol, in the other a knife.

His intention was to cut Hunston loose.

Running across the sand, he soon gained the tree, and with a few vigorous cuts severed the cords which bound him.

Hunston was scarcely able to believe the evidence of his senses.

"How can I thank you?" he said, with tears in his eyes.

"Say nothing about it," replied Jack.

"I'd rather have owed my life to anybody else, but life is sweet, and if I can ever do you a good turn, Harkaway——"

"Never mind that. Take this pistol, and cut it to your friends the Pisangs as quick as you can."

"Won't you take me on board with you?"

"No; that's asking too much. Good-bye," said Jack.

He gave Hunston a friendly nod, and ran back to the boat.

At that moment Harvey's rifle was fired off with a sharp crack.

His quick eye had seen one of the escaped mutineers emerge from the cave where he had taken refuge.

He had levelled his rifle at Jack, but a leaden messenger of death cut short his career before he could pull the trigger.

Hunston was off like a shot.

He disappeared in the jungle, and the boys knew he was safe.

Jack put the boat about, and trembling with excitement, waited for the wind to catch her and send her out to sea.

Again Harvey's rifle was discharged, and again a mutineer fell to the ground.

"They shan't show a head," he exclaimed; "if they do I'm down on them like a beaver."

"Well done, Dick," replied Jack. "I think we deserve the Victoria Cross. Do you know, I am as pleased at saving Hunston as if I had escaped myself from a great danger."

"So am I," said Harvey, adding—

"Look at those fellows. What are they up to?"

Jack looked towards the shore, and saw five of the mutineers, who had emerged into the open from their temporary place of concealment.

They held their arms over their heads, as if to indicate that they surrendered and were defenceless.

"Ahoy!" cried one, who appeared to be the spokesman.

"What do you want?" inquired Jack.

"Take us to the ship, sir," answered the man. "We are the only ones left alive, and we must starve on this island."

"Serve you right; you should have thought of that before," replied Jack.

"Have mercy upon us, sir," continued the mutineer. "We surrender."

"But you have been guilty of mutiny on the high seas, and are murderers."

"We're very sorry. Take us prisoners, and convey us to Singapore in irons, if you like, sir, to take our trial," the man went on.

Jack hesitated.

"The fellows seem sorry enough, Dick," he remarked. "They're regularly licked. Shall we take them on board?"

"We're very short of men, and if we pardoned them they might turn out good men and true," answered Harvey.

"All our leaders are dead, sir. We had no hand in the mutiny. It was Sam Parsons and Jimmy Clark," said the mutineer.

"Come down to the beach, then," replied Jack, "and stand there unarmed. If you try any games on I'll pistol the lot of you."

The mutineers did as they were directed.

Jack stood in shore and allowed them to come on board, making them sit down on the thwarts.

He held pistols in his hands in case of any treachery.

But the poor fellows were so cowed that there did not seem to be the smallest mutinous spirit left in them.

"If you'll try and look over it, sir, we'll work the ship like slaves for you," said the leader: "we will indeed."

"I can't promise you a pardon," answered Jack. "It depends in a great measure on your own conduct. If you behave yourselves I may be inclined to say nothing about the share you took in the mutiny, though you know well enough what the British consul would do to you."

"We were misled, sir, and acted on bad advice. All we want is to return to our duty, and get back to England. We're all—every one of us—married men, sir, and have wives and children, think of that!"

"I can't say any more than I have said," Jack ex-

claimed. "My conduct in the matter will depend upon your behaviour, though I've a good mind to have you lashed to a grating and give you a couple of dozen lashes apiece."

"Do that, and welcome, sir. We deserve it," replied the mutineers, in a body.

They spoke humbly enough, and in the end proved themselves very good men, and were of great use to Jack in the navigation of the ship.

He did ultimately pardon them, and did not have them flogged as he threatened.

They were grateful for his kindness, and it was clear that after the death of their leader they were pleased enough to return to their duty.

With this accession of strength, he hove up the anchor that afternoon and stood for Limbi to get a few natives to help make up the complement of his crew.

Mr. Mole was loud in his praises when he heard the successful result of Jack's expedition.

"A good action, Harkaway, is never thrown away," he said. "You will sleep all the better for it, and I'm sorry now that I tried to dissuade you from the enterprise. What did Hunston say?"

"We hadn't much time to talk, sir?" answered Jack; "the mutineers were popping away at me."

"Did he appear thankful?"

"Very much so. He was quite doubled up by his feelings. But that wouldn't last long. He wanted to join us, and be taken on board."

"Which you, of course refused?" replied Mr. Mole.

"I didn't see it, sir. A black sheep in the flock is not desirable."

"You put coals of fire on his head. Ah, well, it was a gallant action, and one you will never regret. And, now, whither away, may I ask?"

"Limbi is our destination, sir," answered Jack.

Mr. Mole trembled.

"My prophetic soul," he exclaimed, "warns me that my wives will seek to annoy me. What am I to do?"

"Do the best you can, sir."

"Bad will be the best, I am afraid. However," replied Mr. Mole, with a groan, "I will hide myself, and trust to fortune."

Early next morning the "Sea-horse" was standing off Limbi.

They fired a gun to give notice of their arrival to the inhabitants of Tompano.

An hour afterwards several boats put off from the shore.

In one was the new king, Selim, who reigned in the stead of Monday's father, Lanindyer, and with him were several of the most prominent chiefs.

"Where's Mole?" asked Jack of Harvey.

"I don't know; he wasn't at breakfast. He's vanished into the coal bunk or somewhere," replied Harvey.

"Ain't there some women in that last boat?"

"Yes, I can see two."

"Mole's wives, for money!" said Jack. "I'll bet a pound to a pinch of snuff they are Mole's wives."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Harvey.

In the meantime the little fleet of boats drew nearer.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. MOLE BECOMES A BASE DECEIVER.

Just as Harraway was speaking he saw Monday with a sheet on his arm.

"Hi, you Monday! come here," he said.

"Can't stop, sare. Monday very busy," replied the black.

"What are you doing with that sheet?"

"That one secret, sare. Mist' Mole and me do bus iness."

"Oh, Mole's in it, is he? What's the business you've got on?" asked Harvey.

"You not tell, Mast' Harvey?"

"Not I. Out with it."

"Mist' Mole, him sham dead."

"Do what?" cried Jack and Harvey in a breath.

"Sham dead, sare," replied Monday. "Him much 'fraid h'm wives come on board, so he sham dead. Monday go to lay him out and put the sheet on him. You not say a word."

"Where is he?"

"In the cabin, sare. Him lie stretched out on a table, and if Ambonia and Alfura come, I got to say he fight like a warrior and get kill."

"Oh, that's it. He's getting dodgy in his old age," remarked Jack. "Well, cut along, Monday. I shan't split."

Monday disappeared down the companion, and, turning to Harvey, Jack said—

"We must spoil old Mole somehow."

"I should like to," replied Harvey. "Fancy the beggar going to sham being dead!"

"How can we do it?"

"His sorrowing wives will weep over him," said Harvey. "Can't we stick a pin in his leg and wake him up?"

"He's a base deceiver. A pin might galvanise him, only, unfortunately, we haven't got one. There isn't such a thing to be had."

"I'll tell you what we can do," said Harvey.

"What?"

"Tell Ambonia it's the custom in our country, when a man dies, to pull out twelve hairs from each whisker and twenty-four hairs from the head.

Jack laughed.

"You'll be the death of me, Dick," he said.

"And tell her," continued Harvey, "that to save trouble she can pull the hairs out in bunches, and count them afterwards."

"What is she to do with them?"

"Oh, wrap them up in a palm leaf and keep them as relics," said Harvey.

"That will do."

"We might add that the hairs from the head are to be pulled out behind, where it is most tender; and if Mole don't halloa out ten thousand murders, I'm a donkey."

"All right," said Jack; "I'll speak to her when she comes."

The boats approached nearer and nearer.

At last they came near enough for those in them to speak to those on board the vessel.

They were invited on board, and a grand banquet got ready for them.

Ambonia and Alfura were in the last boat, which was

filled with fruit, with which they had intended to do a trade with the strangers.

When they heard that Jack and Harvey were the commanders, they freely made them a present of their cargo.

Their first inquiry, however, was after their husband.

"I'm afraid he is very ill, if not dead," replied Jack.

"Dead!" echoed Alfura and Ambonia.

"Yes, Monday is attending upon him, and he will tell you more about it; but will you come into the cabin and see?" replied Jack.

Both the ladies set up a most cruel yelling, and Jack put his fingers in his ears.

"Don't cry like that," he replied. "He may be all right, though I fear the worst. If he is dead, he fell fighting bravely."

"Let me see him," said Ambonia."

Alfura wept silently.

"It is our custom," continued Jack, "for the widow of a chief to pull out twelve hairs from each of the deceased's whiskers, and twenty-four hairs from the back of his head; you may pull them out in a bunch, if you like, and afterwards they are to be kept in your house to remind you of your husband. Mind you do this if he is dead."

"Call Matabella," said Ambonia.

Jack went to the companion, and called Monday.

He came up, and when he saw Mr. Mole's wives, told them, with a sorrowful face, that he was no more.

"He fell fighting, and has since died of his wounds," he exclaimed.

"When did he die?" asked Ambonia.

"This morning. He is scarcely cold."

"Oh, my poor husband! He was a great chief, and his child will be fatherless," said Ambonia.

Monday did what he could to prevent them going below, but the wives could not be persuaded to stop on deck.

So Monday led the way to the cabin, followed by Jack and Harvey.

When they entered the cabin, they found Mr. Mole stretched out on a table covered with a white sheet.

Their grief was about to burst forth again, when Jack whispered—

"Remember what I told you about our customs."

"Oh, yes! We will do that," replied Ambonia.

Removing the sheet from Mr. Mole's face, she took hold of a bunch of whiskers and gave it a sharp pull.

It did not come out.

Then she tugged again, and it yielded.

Mr. Mole gave the corner of his mouth a short comical twinge.

But he did not cry out.

"Take those hairs, and count them, Alfura," said Ambonia. "I will now try the other side of our dear husband's face."

Mr. Mole's whiskers were scanty, and there was not much hair left on the right side.

He suffered the most acute pain, but bore it like a stoic.

Setting her feet firmly on the floor of the cabin, Ambonia took another hand full and pulled it vigorously.

The hair came out in a bunch like the other.

Something like a stifled curse escaped from the unhappy sufferer.

"Count them, Alfura," said Ambonia, handing her the second tuft.

Alfura proceeded to do so in dolorous silence, and she bathed the grizzly hairs with her tears.

Jack approached and whispered—

"Shall I hold up his head for you?"

Ambonia nodded, and went on with her duty of affection.

She twisted her knuckles firmly in the back hair of the supposed dead man, which was long and tangled.

There was a wrench.

Mr. Mole could bear no more—the pain was too great.

He sprang up and threw the sheet from him.

The resurrection of Lazarus could not have more surprised the beholders than this sudden coming to life.

Ambonia and Alfura darted back, and looked at the late corpse with undisguised terror.

"What the deuce do you mean!" cried Mr. Mole, rubbing the injured part savagely.

"Aren't you dead, sir?" asked Harvey stifled with laughter.

"This is your doing, Master Harvey," replied Mole. "I'll be one with you; and as for those furies, I'll be the death of one or both of them."

Jack and Harvey laughed immoderately.

The wives began to regain their courage, and advanced to their husband with a boldness which they had not shown at first.

He certainly was not dead.

If so, he had been playing them some trick.

Ambonia grew angry, and her yellow face glowed with passion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RUNNING A MUCK.

In his anger, Mr. Mole caught hold of Monday by the ear and shook him.

"You've betrayed me," he cried, "and I'll have it out of you."

"No, sare; not me, sare," replied Monday. "You let go um ear, sare."

"I'll give it you, you black swab," continued Mr. Mole.

Fortunately for Monday, Ambonia rushed up and pushed her husband away.

"Him dead man just now," remarked Monday, grinning with pain; adding, "Oh, golly, how um pull um ear."

Mr. Mole grasped a chair, and brandishing it in the air, threatened to strike any one who came near him.

The women shrank back crying—

"Amok! amok!"

This is a word of peculiar significance among all the Malay tribe.

If a man is unhappy with his wife, unsuccessful in business, and miserable in any manner, he does "amok."

That is to say, he runs into the street with a knife and stabs every one he can meet.

In return for this the inhabitants raise the cry of "Amok!" and run after him with whatever weapon they can obtain.

Eventually he is killed like a mad dog.

It is the Malay mode of committing suicide.

The custom has become proverbial among Englishmen abroad, under the term of running a muck.

Even Monday got out of the way, thinking Mr. Mole was going to "amok."

Jack advanced to Mr. Mole, fearing from his wild appearance that he would do somebody some harm.

"I say, sir!" he said.

"Well, Harkaway, what is it? Keep off, I'm desperate," replied Mole.

"Turn it up, sir."

"I tell you I'm desperate. I tried a little plan of my own, and that black thief betrayed me; may his father, the devil, seize him."

"Are you going off your nut, sir?" asked Jack.

"Let me get at him! I'll pound him," cried Mr. Mole, making a dash at Monday.

"Amok! amok!" exclaimed the terrified women, fully believing that their liege lord and master had gone mad, and was about to run a muck; and, "Amok! amok!" cried Monday, who also thought the same thing.

The wives rushed up on deck, followed by Monday.

"Amok! amok!" rang through the ship.

The native chiefs heard the cry, and they, too, grew alarmed and sought the deck.

"Amok! amok!" cried everybody, with as much terror as we in England say "Mad dog! mad dog!"

The chiefs drew the dreaded creese, or curved knife, so common among the Malay tribes.

Every one stood on the defensive.

When they saw it was a white man who was "amoking," and that white man was Mr. Mole, the great Tuan Biza of the whites, they forebore to strike.

Jack ran on deck after him, and exclaimed in the native language—

"Don't touch him! He's all right."

"Am I all right?" replied Mr. Mole, hitting King Selim on the head with his chair.

Selim fell to the deck stunned.

"Dropped him like a bullock," continued Mr. Mole, with a ghastly grin. "Who is the next gentleman?"

Turning to Harvey, Jack said,

"Mole's cranky, and no humbug about it!"

Madura, the old chief, came up to remonstrate with the white man.

But Mr. Mole was ready for him.

"I'll floor you," he said, "if you come any nearer."

"Listen to the words of wisdom," replied Madura.

"You have married our princesses, and you are dear to us as——"

"Bother the words of wisdom! Take that!" interrupted Mr. Mole.

Madura fell by the side of the king, and the Limbian chiefs began to get angry.

Knives flashed in the sun.

Again the ominous cry of "Amok! amok!" rose on the air.

Ambonia and Alfura now made their appearance on deck.

Alfura fell fainting into Monday's arms.

But Ambonia, being made of sterner stuff, ran to her husband.

"Put down that chair, and come home," she exclaimed.

"Never!" replied Mr. Mole; adding, "Mind your eye!"

He made a push at her with a chair, and struck her in the mouth with one of the wooden legs.

Ambonia began to cough and choke and fell on her back in strong convulsions.

"She's swallowed a tooth," said Jack.

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, with a light of insanity in his eye. "Who is the next? Will you kindly keep the ball rolling?"

Nobody seemed inclined to oblige him, and the knives flashed more ominously than ever in the sunlight.

The Limbians were waiting for him to make a rush down the deck, where they were prepared to cut short his mortal career as quickly as possible.

But Ambonia was a woman of spirit.

She was one of those estimable women you don't knock down for nothing.

It is true she had swallowed a tooth, as Jack surmised.

But what then?

She was for the moment subdued, not conquered, and as soon as the tooth was properly down and she could breathe again she was on her feet.

Advancing to Mr. Mole with the quickness of a cannon-ball, she grasped the chair which he brandished on high, and a desperate struggle took place between them.

"Amok! amok!" cried the natives, advancing threateningly.

Wresting himself free from Ambonia's grasp, Mr. **Mole**

sprang on the taffrail, and throwing up his arms exclaimed—

"Thus do I free myself from the strange women, and the house of bondage!"

With that he cast himself headlong into the sea and disappeared.

Jack was now fully assured that Mr. Mole had really gone out of his mind for a time.

"Man overboard!" cried Bouncer, who was standing near.

Jack had an idea that Mr. Mole could not swim, and was determined to save him at all hazards.

"Lower a boat and man her!" he exclaimed.

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied Bouncer. "We saved the lives of two hundred and fifty men off the coast of Africa, and——"

"Hang your yarns! Obey orders!" shouted Jack.

He caught sight of Harvey, who was taking off his jacket.

"Toss you who does it, Dick!" he exclaimed.

"All right," said Harvey; "I've got a coin in my pocket. First time. Man or woman?"

He put a small coin between his hands and Jack said—

"Man."

"Man it is; over you go," said Harvey.

The next moment Jack was diving like an otter after Mr. Mole.

He fortunately saw him as he rose to the surface, and grasping him by the arm held him up.

In a short time the boat which had been duly lowered under Harvey's superintendence came up.

It took them both on board.

Mr. Mole was insensible and raved incoherently, as if stricken with a fever.

They drew him on board, and put him to bed in what they call a sick bay or hospital.

Ben Blunt was still an inmate of this cabin, but he could get about a little, and readily undertook to nurse and look after Mr. Mole.

"I've seen many a fever, sir," he remarked, "and cured 'em too; they're common enough in these latitudes. The gentleman may be bad for a few weeks, but it'll do him good afterwards."

"He's very ill, Ben," replied Jack.

"Yes, sir; it's the mental excitement. He's been worked upon."

"So he has, Ben."

"And there's another thing, sir; he's had a good drop to drink lately, as I know of, and I shouldn't wonder if it wasn't no real fever after all."

Ben Blunt shook his head significantly as he spoke.

"No fever, Ben?" said Jack.

"No. sir. It's the delirium tremblings; that's what it is."

"Keep your eye on him, Ben, and say nothing to anybody. I must go on deck, and see to the women."

"Very well, sir," replied the boatswain.

"This affair has upset the banquet. We were going to put on a feed for the natives."

"Lor' love you, sir, they can allers eat," said Ben; "and they'll be none the worse for waiting. Though I may say as I did laugh that hearty as I was fit to bust, when I heard them a-crying 'amok! amok!' and saw the gentleman floor them beautiful."

Jack took leave of Ben, after exacting another assurance that he would look after his patient.

Then he went on deck.

Harvey had kept the women quiet, and was trying to explain matters to the chiefs.

The king and Madura were not much hurt, and under the soothing influence of a glass or two of good wine, which was handed round by Monday, speedily regained their good temper.

Ambonia begged to be taken to her husband.

Jack was obliged to refuse this request, though he told told her she might see him later in the day.

It was soon understood that Tuan Biza Mole had been attacked by fever.

"He'll be all right in a short time," said Jack to the two wives; "and I know he really loves you both, though of the two I think he's rather more spoony on you, Ambonia."

The lady's eyes flashed at this announcement, which pleased her greatly.

"He's always talking about you," said Jack.

"Will he come on shore, and go to live with us at Tompano, when he gets better?" she asked.

"Of course he will; he's only too anxious."

"Bless him," said Ambonia, in her own language, "I could go and kiss every bit of him."

It was lucky Mr. Mole did not hear this expression of affection on the part of his biggest wife, or he might have died there and then.

Jack succeeded in assuring her that Mr. Mole had in the morning been attacked with a faintness that Monday thought was death, and that no one had played any trick upon her.

After that, he gave her his arm, and led her into the chief cabin.

Harvey took Alfura in, and the chiefs followed in order of merit.

The banquet consisted of all the eatables and drinkables they could find in the ship.

Jack had arranged for the pardoned mutineers to wait at table, which they did with great steadiness.

The banquet passed off capitally. All the chiefs enjoyed themselves immensely, and some drank so much wine that they had to be carried out and put gently into their boats.

Alfura and Ambonia had a look at Mr. Mole before they went to shore.

This time they were satisfied that he was really ill, and said they would bring him some fruit in the morning.

Harvey gave Alfura a kiss on the sly, as he handed her over the ship's side, and she squeezed his hand in return.

Such are wives in Limbi.

King Selim readily lent Jack half a dozen of his subjects to help work the ship.

It was understood that they should be sent back again to their native land, and they were chosen by Monday from among his personal friends.

So popular were the white men, that they could have got a hundred men if they had wanted them.

Instead of the question being who should not go, there was a rush of men of all ages to get the chance.

When all was ready for sailing, Jack went ashore to return the complimentary visit of the Limbians.

He had also an object in going.

Madura was an old chief of great knowledge and experience.

He wished to ask him some questions about the City of the Golden Towers.

Who more likely than the venerable Madura to give him the information he sought?

CHAPTER XXIV.

AYOUB.

On arriving at Tompano, Jack sought Madura and explained, as briefly as he could, the object he had in view.

"I want," he said, "to recover this English girl, Emily, before I return to England."

"You say," said Madura, "that she has gone with the fugitive Pisangs to the City of the Golden Towers?"

"Yes. Do you know where it is?"

"I do. I have been there," replied Madura.

"Have you?" cried Jack, joyfully. "That's your sort, old man. That will do; tell us all about it."

"I cannot give you much information," replied Madura; "and for this reason——"

Jack's countenance fell again.

"I was very young when my father and I were out fishing, and the pirates captured us. My father died in the City of the Golden Towers, and I lived there some years."

"How did you get back here?"

"I escaped with some others in a boat, and can only dimly remember a great city, very rich, with many ships: and all the people pirates."

"That is a nice place indeed for my poor little Emily to be sent to," said Jack.

"Your Emily is young and beautiful," said Madura, "and they will guard her as carefully as they would a pearl of Sirendib."

"I hope so, I'm sure. But can't you tell us how to steer to get to this wonderful city of pirates?"

Madura shook his head.

"There is one amongst us who can if he will," he said, after a thoughtful pause; "and that is old Ayoub, the

Arab. He is a great sailor, and was a pirate himself once, some say."

"Where is he to be found?" asked Jack.

"He has a house here in Tompano. You must have seen him, for he attends the council. It is now ten years since he came ashore in a boat and became friends with us, settling down and taking a Limbian woman to wife."

"Let us go to him. Is he very old?"

"No. Though his hair is tinged with grey, he is younger than he looks," replied Madura.

"Will he pilot us to this city?"

"Ask him. I dare say he will."

They walked to the house occupied by Ayoub, the Arab, who was sitting outside, with a little curly-haired child on his knee, that was just learning to call him father.

Madura, in a few words, explained to the venerable-looking man the object which Jack had in view.

"He has got a good ship, plenty of men, arms, ammunition, and provisions. All he now wants is to discover the City of the Golden Towers, rescue his beloved Emily, and return to his own land," concluded Madura.

Ayoub's eyes flashed with a keenness that showed he could remember the scene of his early days.

"Is it not written," he said, "that the bold man may be overthrown, and the wise man be confounded, but the patient man overcometh?"

"I'm not in a hurry, governor," replied Jack; "and am rather in favour of taking things easy."

"There are few nations and countries, my son, that I have not seen," continued Ayoub. "Most of my countrymen travel from the Bar-el-Sham to the Bar-el-Gemm" (really, Syria to Arabia Felix), "and say they have seen the world, but I——"

"I'll tell you what I'll do," interrupted Jack, who saw that the Arab was a prosy old fellow, whatever else he might be.

"Speak. It is well to listen; so say all the men of understanding."

"I'll give you and your wife and kids a free passage to Arabia, if you will come on board and pilot us to this city of the pirates."

The old man's eyes sparkled.

"You have well said, O my son," he replied. "These old eyes yearn to behold my friends and relations once more. I would fain lay my bones with my fathers."

"Do you accept my terms?" said Jack.

"Yes, I will go with you," said Ayoub. "When I reached this land in a little boat, and all those who had sailed with me were dead and gone, I was received with kindness, which I have endeavoured to repay by lifting my voice in the council, but I thought to die here. You come to me, young man, like pleasant water to the traveller in the desert, and behold, I find your speech good."

"Pack up your traps," exclaimed Jack, "as soon as you like. Say good-bye, and don't take more luggage than is absolutely necessary. By the way, is the missis agreeable?"

"My wife obeyeth me in all things," replied the Arab. "For is it not written that 'a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband?'"

"You are sure that you can pilot us to the City of the Golden Towers," continued Jack.

An expression of lofty scorn sat on the old man's face.

"The dreams of the young," he said, "are stronger than the realities of the old; but for many years I have steered the ships of the pirates in these China seas. So that they are become familiar to me as a well-trodden pathway."

"How many days will it take us to get there?"

"When one moon shall have come and gone, then shall we behold the Towers of the Golden City," replied Ayoub.

"That means a month," replied Jack. "Time enough too."

He returned to the ship, however, much pleased at having obtained a guide to the mysterious city.

The next day the ship sailed.

Ayoub took the post of pilot, and directed the vessel's course.

In a short time both Mr. Mole and Ben Blunt were well enough to get about again.

Mole's wives had been assured that their husband would return to them in a month or two.

They were desirous of accompanying him on the voyage, but this Jack could not permit

Each hung a charm round his neck, to guard him from evil spirits.

Alfura's charm was a dried tree-toad and Ambonia's the tail of a snake also dried.

Whether they were efficacious or not, the fever left him in a few days, and he went about as usual.

As far as Jack could make out, Ayoub caused the ship to skirt the Malay peninsula, going towards Cape Pentani.

Everyone was well on board, and in high spirits.

Harvey did not like Ayoub.

He communicated his suspicions to Jack, who laughed at his fears.

"The old fellow talks to himself, and smiles when no one is looking, as he thinks, at him," said Harvey.

"He's all right enough," replied Jack, carelessly.

"I don't know so much about that," continued Harvey. "We are going amongst Malay pirates."

"Well?"

"Well," said Harvey, "they are a daring and bloodthirsty race. This Ayoub has been amongst them."

"What then?"

"He may intend to betray us. I don't say he will, still we should keep an eye on him," said Harvey.

This conversation produced a great impression on Jack.

He watched Ayoub narrowly, but did not for some time discover anything that would lend confirmation to the suspicions Harvey's remarks had excited in his mind.

CHAPTER XXV.

H. M. S. "VICTOR."

Ayoub, the pilot, seemed a harmless, inoffensive man, and Jack could see no just ground for the suspicions in which Harvey indulged.

He had undertaken to guide him to the City of the Golden Towers, and he appeared to be keeping his word to the best of his ability.

How Jack longed to reach that mysterious nest of the Malay pirates, that hidden stronghold, where the defeated Pisangs had gone, and where Emily was a prisoner.

A slight incident occurred which tended to give some confirmation to Harvey's injurious remarks about Ayoub.

After they had been some days out, they sighted a large ship.

Ben Blunt was standing by Jack's side, and before a glass was brought to bear upon her, Ben said—

"I'm a Dutchman, sir, if that's not a man-of-war."

"Yankee?" asked Jack.

"No; she's not a Yankee either. That's one of Her Britannic Majesty's cruisers. I ought to know the shape of 'em if any one does, seeing I served aboard one for so many years."

"What's she doing out here, Ben?"

"After the pirates, maybe; or going from one station to another. Lor, sir, England's such a great power by land and sea that she's got ships and armies, leastways regiments, pretty nigh everywhere."

"Cut down below, Ben, and see that the cabin is all straight and shipshape," exclaimed Jack.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"If I've got to receive on board my ship one of the captains in the Royal Navy, I should not like him to go away with the impression that we are a set of lubbers. You know how to do it, and how things ought to be, Ben?"

"Do you think I'm a sucking porpoise, sir?" said Ben, in a tone of indignation.

He went below to execute his orders, and the two ships gradually neared each other.

It soon became clear enough that Ben's sharp eyes had not deceived him.

The approaching vessel was a man-of-war, and the mutineers whom Jack had taken on board getting wind of it, came aft.

"I ax your pardon, Captain Harkaway," said the foremost, "but here's one of the Queen's ships."

"What of that?" replied Jack.

"We've tried to do our duty, sir, and we're only poor fellows who were misled by others. You're not going to send us to Singapore, to be punished for the mutiny? Give us your word, sir, that's all, or we'd rather jump overboard."

"Go forward, and do your duty," answered Jack, "I shan't be hard on you."

"But, sir——"

"Do you hear when you are spoken to?" cried Jack, in the commanding tone he could assume when he liked. "Be off."

The men touched their hats and went forward, much comforted by the way in which Jack spoke to them, although they were not quite relieved from a fear of the consequences of their actions.

The man-of-war fired a gun as a signal that the "Seahorse" was to lay to, which she did.

Then a boat was lowered and manned, pulling towards the merchantman.

Mr. Mole, who, like Ben Blunt, had recovered from his illness, heard the news and came on deck.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "a ship, I perceive, Harkaway, a big ship. They tell me an H. M. S., which I presume you are aware is short for her majesty's service. They have lowered a boat. They propel it in man-of-war fashion through the waves and they near us perceptibly."

"They'll board us directly, sir," exclaimed Jack.

"And why so? Is not our ship private property, and why should they board us?"

"Nothing unfriendly about it, sir. There's opium-smuggling going on, and pirates are about in these seas. They only want to see our papers, and know who we are."

"Ah, I apprehend I may be of service to you," said Mr. Mole. "My age, my manner, my position as a land-owner in China, will give me weight with our visitors. They will treat me with more deference than they would bestow upon a mere boy."

"Mere boy as you call me," said Jack, biting his lips with annoyance, "I think I can manage my affairs better than any one can manage them for me."

"Listen to reason, Harkaway, I——"

"Mr. Mole," interrupted Jack, "without wishing to be in the least degree in the world discourteous to you, I must tell you, once for all, that you are only a passenger on board this ship, and the sooner you recognise the fact the better it will be for all parties."

"Oh! as you please, as you please," replied Mr. Mole, shrugging his shoulders. "If you reject my well-meant offer of assistance, I can only regret your utter want of appreciation."

He walked away along the deck in high dudgeon.

In a short time the boat ran alongside, and an officer came on board.

He looked round him and stared, when Jack said—

"I am the captain of this ship, sir; anything you have to say I shall be happy to hear."

"You!" repeated the officer, who was a naval lieutenant about forty years of age, dressed in uniform, and who, from want of interest, had not been able to attain a higher rank.

"I have already had the honour to inform you that I am the captain of this vessel, and if you doubt my word I will give you satisfactory proof of the truth of what I say."

"I beg your pardon. You are so young that I trust you will forgive my momentary hesitation," said the officer.

"And who may I be talking to?" asked Jack.

"I am Lieutenant Skeffington, of H. M. S. 'Victor,' Commander Dacres, cruising in the China Sea in search of pirates, who have done a vast amount of mischief lately amongst the English and other merchantmen."

"Will you follow me into my cabin? We can talk more at our ease there," continued Jack.

The lieutenant bowed, and Jack, preceded by Ben Blunt, conducted his visitor into the cabin.

Directly Lieutenant Skeffington was seated and saw Ben, he said—

"I have seen you before, my man."

"Your honour's right," replied Ben. "I was bo'sun on board the 'Rattlesnake,' Captain Howard, nigh upon two years ago, and your honour was second luff."

"I remember you taking your discharge when we were paid off. I consider your presence on board this ship as a guarantee of the respectability of its captain," said Lieutenant Skeffington.

Ben bowed and scraped in true sailor fashion in recognition of the compliment, and retired outside the door, waiting within call.

Jack, in as few words as possible, explained to the lieutenant how he came to be in his present position, and why he was going to the pirates' stronghold.

"You have had some strange adventures, Mr. Hark-

away," said the lieutenant. "Wrecked, cast on a desert island, nearly killed by savage head-hunters—you are quite a hero of romance, and will be the lion of the London drawing-rooms on your return to your own country."

"I have no wish to be a lion," replied Jack, laughing.

"Those who go down to the sea in ships, become acquainted with strange perils. However, I hope you will find, and rescue this young lady in whom you take such a laudable interest. We too are in search of this City of the Golden Towers."

"Do you know its position?"

"We do not, though we are told it is somewhere near here, on the coast of the Malay Peninsula. Has not the pilot, Ayoub, of whom you speak, told you where it is situated?"

"No, he is very reserved. He says he will take me to the city, but he is not at all inclined to be communicative," said Jack.

"It is our intention to burn all the ships we can find, and then blow the town about the ears of the pirates. We might sail in consort."

"With pleasure. The 'Victor' would be an agreeable companion."

"Do you mind sending for this Ayoub? I will put some questions to him."

"Certainly."

Jack called Ben and despatched him for the pilot, with whom he presently returned.

The venerable Arab looked suspiciously at Lieutenant Skeffington, and asked what his pleasure was with him.

"What is the position of the pirates' stronghold, and how are we to steer to it?" said the lieutenant.

Ayoub's face assumed a sullen demeanour.

"I am not at liberty to make any disclosures," he answered.

"And why not?"

"Because you would go there in an unfriendly spirit. Those Malays, pirates though they be, were once my friends."

"That is as much as admitting that you were a pirate yourself."

Ayoub turned pale under his dusky skin.

"No," he said, "you do not speak the words of truth.

I was not one of them, though they saved my life, and my lot was cast among them for many months."

"You have undertaken to conduct Captain Harkaway to the city?"

"I have, but he means no harm."

"What is to prevent us from following in your wake, and stringing you up to the yard-arm if you play us false," asked the lieutenant, fixing his clear grey eyes searchingly upon him.

"My poor life is of little value, and if an English officer thought fit to hang the poor Arab, he would be welcome to do so; yet would Ayoub, if he saw the British man-of-war following this merchantman, run her upon a rock, so that all should perish."

"The villanous old scoundrel!" muttered Skeffington, adding aloud, "you would destroy the ship and all on board of her?"

"As surely as the water-logged and dismantled vessel, when caught by a swift current, rushes swiftly to her doom, so would Ayoub steer the 'Sea-horse' to the waters of death."

"But reflect, Ayoub," said Jack, "those pirates are bloodthirsty villains; they murder people and sink ships; they are the robbers of the sea; do they not deserve death?"

"Ayoub has spoken."

"I am very much displeased with you. Return to your duty," exclaimed Jack, angrily.

The old man salaamed, and retired.

"He would be as good as his word, too," said the lieutenant. "Can you do without him?"

"Impossible. There is no one on board who knows where this mysterious city is but Ayoub, and I might wander up and down a dangerous coast, of which I have no chart, for months and never find it."

"I have heard that it is placed some miles up the mouth of a river. However, if you must have Ayoub's services, we can not keep your company, that is evident."

"It is my loss."

"You are very good to say so," answered the lieutenant, politely. "I will make a favourable report of you to my captain, and I hope we shall not be long in finding out the town."

"I hope so, too."

"I have a word of advice to give you. Beware of that old man."

"Why? He is honest enough," said Jack.

"I don't think so," answered the lieutenant, shaking his head gravely. "He has a bad face. His eyes are full of deceit, and I fear he means to betray you."

"He will be clever if he does."

"His refusal to allow us to accompany you tells against him, but if you should be given up to the pirates——"

"By Ayoub?"

"Yes."

"We would fight to the last man, first," said Jack.

"Aye, aye, that is all very well, but you can't fight against treachery. Should you be a prisoner, will your friends, when we come to the city, and commence shelling it—for all things are possible—hoist a white flag over the house in which you are? and I will direct our gunners to spare that particular building."

Jack smiled incredulously.

"I hope, Lieutenant Skeffington," he replied, "that you are taking too gloomy a view of what may happen."

"I hope so, too. Promise me, nevertheless, that you will remember my undertaking."

"Certainly I will, and I thank you very much for the kindness you have shown in thinking so far ahead of the chances of war."

"And now farewell," said Skeffington.

"Can I offer you any refreshment?"

"Thanks, none at present. Is there anything we can send you? Medical stores, or things of that sort."

Jack declined the offer.

The lieutenant rose, and shook him heartily by the hand.

"I am very pleased to have made your acquaintance, Mr. Harkaway," he said; "you have displayed great tact and courage under very trying circumstances and you are an honour to the merchant service; I feel that the royal navy has suffered a heavy loss in not having you as one of its sons."

Jack uttered his thanks at this praise, and conducted the lieutenant to the side of the vessel.

As he was getting into his boat, he said—

"Once more, keep an eye on that villanous Arab."

"Never fear," replied Jack.

In less than a minute the oars fell into the water, and the measured sound of their rise and fall in the rowlocks fell upon the ear with that regularity which only a man-of-war's crew can produce.

"Now, my lads," said Jack, "give them a cheer. Don't be afraid of it. Three times three, and let it be a rouser."

Instantly the members of the crew, who had congregated on deck, gave a tremenduous cheer in true British fashion.

The man-of-war's men acknowledged the compliment by raising their oars, and standing them upright in a row in the centre of the boat.

Then they fell with a splash, and the launch returned to H. M. S. "Victor," which looked the picture of beauty as she rode proudly on the rippling waves.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CASTAWAY.

Jack was rather alarmed at the confirmation which Harvey's suspicions had received.

It was strange that Ayoub should show such a decided disinclination to have the "Victor" for a consort.

And yet, on consideration, Jack made excuses for his desire to save from fire and sword those amongst whom he had lived, and who had been kind to him.

However, he was sincere in his determination to find Emily, and nothing would have induced him to turn out of his course.

Harvey was anxious to know what had passed between him and the officer of the British vessel.

Jack repeated their conversation.

"What did I tell you?" said Harvey. "I knew that Arab was a bad lot."

"He won't do us any harm," replied Jack.

"I don't feel so sure about that. You are too easy-going."

"My dear Dick, if one was always to fancy danger ahead, one would be worried into the grave. Time enough to face it when the peril comes," answered Jack.

"If I saw any indication of foul play I'd shoot him through the head, as a warning to others."

"So I will. He shall have a bullet through his head in double quick time," Jack said.

The man-of-war set her sails, and was soon lost to sight in the distance.

About midday the lookout reported an object in sight.

"Where away?" asked Jack.

"Abaft the beam," was the reply.

Jack gave orders to bear down upon it, and in about an hour, a small boat was clearly made out.

Whether there was anyone in it or not could not be distinguished.

But as the "Sea-horse" got nearer, the body of a human being was discovered lying down between the thwarts, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion.

Lowering a boat, Jack had the castaway brought on board.

He was laid on the deck, and seemed to be only just alive, if the spark of life wasn't already extinguished.

As Jack's eyes fell on his face, he uttered a cry of amazement.

"Dick," he exclaimed, "come here."

Harvey was by his side in a moment.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Don't you see?"

"See what?"

"The fellow's face. It is Hunston."

"Bless my soul! so it is; but how altered," replied Harvey. "He is pinched with hunger. Case of starvation. Poor beggar!"

"Poor beggar, indeed," said Jack, visibly annoyed. "I almost wish we hadn't seen him, and that the man-of-war had picked him up instead."

"You can't abandon him now."

"I don't mean to. But it looks as if he had done it on purpose."

Harvey could not help smiling at this view of the case.

"Have him put in a bunk," he said, "and attended to. Ben! Where's Ben Blunt?"

"Present, sir," replied Ben, coming up.

"Here is a man you have seen before. He was the friend and companion of your mutineers. Mr. Harkaway saved his life if you remember."

"They say a bad penny is sure to turn up, sir," remarked Ben.

"Have him taken below, please," returned Jack, "and pour some soup down his throat; he is in the last stage of exhaustion. Do what you can for him," Ben.

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the boatswain.

Hunston, pale, emaciated, scarcely breathing, was attended to with a care peculiar to sailors when cases of distress are brought before their notice.

Monday brought a report a couple of hours later, that the sick man was progressing favourably.

"Him eat um soup, sare," he replied, "and him wink at it with um eyes."

"Is that a good sign, Monday?" asked Harvey.

"Always um good sign, sare, when um wink um eye," replied Monday.

"All right. Keep near him. He shan't say we are behind the age in civilisation; we are not barbarians, and know how to behave ourselves even when an enemy comes amongst us."

"We've got two of them now, Dick," observed Jack.

"Two?"

"Yes; Hunston if he lives—and Ayoub, that is, if your suspicions are well founded."

Mr. Mole now came on deck with a book in his hand.

He had found a box of books in the captain's cabin, and he passed the principal part of his time lolling on a couch near an open port-hole, smoking some good cigars, which he had also found and "requisitioned," and drinking brandy and water, which he called brandy pawnee.

"Fine thing, brandy pawnee," he said. "Stuff all Indian gentlemen drink; that is to say, all gentlemen—all English gentlemen—in India drink; for we can't call the native Mahomedans, Hindoos, and what not gentlemen."

"Well, sir, what's the time of day?" said Jack.

"You know very well, Harkaway," answered Mr. Mole, "that when I was in captivity among the Pisangs, the wretched Hunston stole my watch."

"Just like him, sir. He'd steal another if you'd got it."

"No, he wouldn't, my lad," replied Mr. Mole, with a knowing look; "Hunston is vegetating on his island."

"What will you bet about that, sir?" said Jack.

"Bet? I'd bet my—my tea-garden in China. It's a man-of-war to a fishing smack, or Homer to a boy's first Greek exercise."

"I'll take you, sir. If Hunston is now on board this ship, and I convince you of the fact, your tea-garden becomes mine?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Mole, puzzled.

"Monday!" said Jack.

"Coming, sare," replied Monday, who was in the centre of a group of sailors, whom he was entertaining with an account of Hunston's villany.

"Isn't Hunston on board the 'Sea-horse'?"

"For sartin, Mast' Jack; wuss luck, too. No good come to ship while villain Hunston on board of him," said Monday.

"Don't call names, Monday," replied Harvey.

"Is this a joke, Harkaway?" said Mr. Mole. "If so, it is a very bad one, and I will cudgel this black fellow for joining in it."

Monday grinned.

"Candidly, sir, it is no joke. We picked Hunston up this morning lying in an exhausted condition in a boat."

"All by himself?"

"Quite alone," replied Jack.

"Where is he now?"

"Monday will show you."

"Come, my coloured friend," said Mr. Mole, "I must behold him with my own eyes; seeing is believing. No offence to you, Harkaway. Lead on, Monday."

"Did you ever see a whale, Dick?" asked Jack.

Harvey put his tongue in his cheek, and Mr. Mole, turning sharply round, said—

"Harkaway, it is too bad of you to make fun of my poor attempt at a song. I will never oblige you again in a similar manner."

"Don't say that, sir," replied Jack, as he moved away. "Mole's awfully touchy about his song," he added to Harvey.

"Yes, he knows it's a bad one, and he would not have sung at all, if he had not been made, so he gets needled."

Presently Mr. Mole came back.

"Have you seen him, sir?" asked Jack.

"Yes, but what a wreck!"

"Are you satisfied?"

"I am not," replied Mr. Mole emphatically. "I look upon Hunston's presence in this ship as a fertile source of disaster. How do you suppose he came into that boat?"

"That's what the father asked about his son in Molière's comedy—'How the deuce did he get into the boat?'" replied Jack.

"I think I can make a guess," cried Harvey. "He must have started with some Pisangs, for the City of the Golden Towers, a storm came on——"

"Or they had a free fight," put in Jack.

"That's probable at all events. The remainder of the crew were washed or thrown overboard, Hunston remained alone, and couldn't manage the boat by himself. Starvation ensued, as he lost his way on the pathless ocean."

"Don't become poetical, Dick," exclaimed Jack.

"Why shouldn't I, if I choose? You show me a road on the sea, and I'll never apply the epithet pathless to it again."

"Have a care, Harkaway, how you warm a viper in your bosom," said Mr. Mole.

"I am not in the habit, sir, of imparting artificial heat to vermin of that description," replied Jack.

"Nonsense! You know what I mean."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I do not."

"Then," said Mr. Mole, "you are more obtuse than I gave you credit for being—I spoke figuratively. Mind that, if you are kind to Hunston, he does not, as he has done before, turn round upon you."

"I'll keep my weather eye open, sir. But you would not have had me turn the poor beast adrift in the state in which we found him," said Jack.

"Well, no; on consideration, decidedly no. There is something which beats under the fifth rib. Harkaway, which counsels a more humane course."

"The heart?" said Jack.

"Precisely; you have guessed rightly. We have hearts, we must be human. We are Christians, and

must play the part of the good Samaritan. Will any of you boys come into the cabin and partake of pawnee?"

"Don't mind if I do so. Been reading," said Jack.

"Yes, just a little go in at the higher mathematics, Harkaway. Having the advantage of books, one must keep one's hand in," replied Mr. Mole.

Harvey and Jack followed him into the cabin, to have some brandy pawnee, and Harvey whispered—

"The old humbug. Do you know what he has been reading? It's not mathematics at all. I looked at the book while he had it under his arm."

"What was it, then?"

"A French novel," answered Harvey laughing.

It must be confessed that Mr. Mole was a bit of a humbug.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE STORM.

The boys stayed in the cabin with Mr. Mole until that gentleman became very good-tempered, and was more highly pleased than ever with his brandy pawnee.

Feeling an increased motion of the ship, Jack said the wind was rising.

"Let it rise," replied Mr. Mole grandly. "I trust we are superior to changes of the weather. In my young days, I knew the time when I was very glad to raise the wind."

"Uncle, sir?" said Harvey.

"Precisely so, but not for luxuries or superfluities. If I spent money, it was on my studies. Books, Harvey, were what I bought. I could live on a crust of bread and a draught of water for a week."

"You've changed a good bit since then, sir. Haven't you?" said Jack.

"Now, my dear boy, I am in the noontide of life, I have a tea-garden in China. Circumstances alter cases," replied Mr. Mole.

"If we get any rough weather I hope we shan't come to grief," Jack remarked.

"Ah," said Mr. Mole, "that's the worst of putting boys in men's places."

"What, sir?"

"It's the case of the square peg in the round hole, Harkaway."

"Am I a square peg?" asked Jack.

"Very square, and to use a vulgar expression, you may find yourself in a hole. You should have made good use of your time and have learnt navigation."

"I know a little—enough for everyday use, sir," Jack said.

"It's my opinion there is only one man on board this ship who knows how to work it," Mr. Mole continued.

"Who's he?" said Harvey.

"Myself, Harvey. Isaac Mole, your humble servant." Jack laughed.

"Do not laugh, my young, but still intelligent friend," Mr. Mole exclaimed; "it is not becoming to laugh at those older than yourself. I have an observant eye."

"Did you ever see a whale, sir?"

"That question shows a want of respect, and I shall devote my conversation to Harvey," answered Mr. Mole in high dudgeon.

"Certainly, sir," Harvey said. "Curious creatures, whales, ain't they?"

"If you indulge also in the puerile amusement called chaff, I shall retire into myself, smoke the cigar of peace, and hold my peace," said Mr. Mole, mixing himself another pawnee.

Monday entered the cabin.

"Good-morning, Monday," said Mr. Mole forgetting that he had seen him before that day.

"It's not morning, Monday, now, sir," remarked Jack.

"Eh?"

"It's Monday afternoon, sir," said Jack perpetrating a joke, and adding—

"What is it, Mon?"

"Um Ben Blunt want Mast' Jack. The weather, him getting very bad, sare."

"Hang me if I didn't think so," replied Jack, rising with an uneasy expression of face.

"It's all Mast' Hunston, sare; him like um Mother Carey's chicken. When him come on board, all go wrong," exclaimed Monday.

"I am not superstitious enough to believe that, though I don't like the look of things at all."

Suddenly the ship gave a lurch.

She was struck by a heavy squall, and had heeled a little on the left side.

The men were all at their stations, and touching his hat, Ben reported to Jack, as he hurried on deck, that the foresail was split.

"Bend another," replied Jack.

The crew set to work, unbent the split foresail and bent another.

For some hours the weather got worse.

They experienced a succession of heavy squalls, and shipped water.

At four o'clock a heavy sea burst into the main deck, sweeping water casks and loose gear overboard.

"Go forward, Dick, and ask Ben to ascertain if the cargo has shifted," said Jack.

Harvey returned with Ben, who said he thought the first tier had shifted a little, but not to an extent of any consequence.

"What's the damage?" asked Jack.

"It's carried away the mainsheet," replied Ben, "and the peak halyards."

"Anything else?"

"Monday reports that the cabin windows are smashed in."

"Man the pumps," exclaimed Jack, "and at the same time secure cargo and repair damages."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Ben, who liked to be commanded in this navy fashion.

If Jack had lost his head and said, "What are we to do?" perhaps the old boatswain would have lost his too, and the men would have followed suit.

Example is everything to men in a subordinate position.

The majority of men can obey, but they can't order.

Jack was as cool as a melon, and went about everywhere, encouraging the men with his presence.

At nine o'clock the pumps had hove out a quantity of water mixed with tea which had got loose in the hold.

There was a high cross sea.

Jack stowed foresail and jib, set close-reefed mainsail and hove the ship to, with her head northwest.

The night passed without any change.

Mr. Mole was nowhere to be seen, though Monday hinted he was on his back, snoring loudly, under the mingled influence of fear and brandy pawnee.

In the morning the sea raged with dreadful fury.

Jack had not closed his eyes all night.

Ayoub still kept the helm, and stated that the coast was at times very stormy, and he knew they were not far from their destination.

"How many days' sail are we from the City of the Golden Towers?" asked Jack.

"Two, sahib," replied the Arab.

"Only two?"

"If we run before this wind, we shall make the land sooner, but we have to run some miles up a river," continued Ayoub.

"Then," thought Jack, "Lieutenant Skeffington was right in his suspicions. This remarkable city does lie up a river, and there is more chance of H. M. S. 'Victor' finding it out than I first thought there was."

While he was talking to Ayoub a sea swept the bowsprit from the bollards and the foremast from the deck.

"Hullo! God help us," ejaculated Jack, who remembered his first wreck.

Another sea followed, and the mainmast snapped like a reed, three feet above the deck.

One man was hurt badly, and the cargo shifted.

The ship tossed, and swayed her spars with great violence.

Ben Blunt hastened to the helm.

He pushed Ayoub on one side saying—

"What's the blundering old ass about? He's no better than a woman at the wheel in a gale of wind."

"Wear her, Blunt, wear her," cried Jack.

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the veteran.

Ayoub looked on with the passivity of an oriental.

"Steady, Blunt, for your life, steady," continued Jack. "She'll bilge and founder else."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Ben, again, as the wheel flew round under his practised hands.

It was a great risk, but the ship answered to the helm, and she was brought to windward.

Jack now ordered the crew to cut away abaft, holding on forward.

In a short time she floated clear, but the once beautiful "Sea-horse" was a perfect wreck.

The storm was now at its height.

In a short time it began visibly to decline, and the immediate danger was over.

But Jack's heart grew sad when he thought of the irreparable damage that was done to the lovely ship he had hoped to reach England in, but which would now be useless.

Ben reported the rudder-head disabled, and the wheel broken.

She was drifting at the mercy of the waves towards an unknown coast, the only inhabitants of which were a nest of pirates.

With difficulty the rudder was wedged, and damages again repaired in the best manner under the circumstances.

Finding the port anchor stock to be the best elevation, Jack had a globular light placed upon it, during the night.

Then the wind went down and the gale abated, but not before it had swept away the storm drag, leaving the vessel a helpless wreck.

A small spar was stood by the stump of the mainmast, and secured as well as possible.

This formed a jury mast.

Two oars were clinched together for a yard and bent to a piece of canvas.

This set a sail, leg-of-mutton fashion.

With this curiously-rigged mast, and a signal of distress flying, the "Sea-horse" drifted for two days.

Mr. Mole obstinately refused to move, and the boys took all the responsibility upon themselves.

Ben Blunt, who was an old sailor, gave Jack great credit for the way in which he had handled the ship.

"Under Providence, sir," he said, "you've saved this vessel, young as you are. I'm an old salt, and I know how things should be, though I couldn't have done as you did, and I doubt whether many a first luff in her majesty's service could have done better."

"I did my best, Ben," Jack answered.

"And a good 'best' it was, sir. We've saved our lives and we may hope to make a port somewhere."

Jack and Ben Blunt were standing alone, Harvey was with Mr. Mole in the cabin, for Mr. Mole had not been at all well.

Either the brandy pawnee or the storm had not agreed with him.

In Jack's face could be discovered a trace of sadness and disappointment.

Jack had got to love the old ship.

She was to have borne him and Emily back to England, when he had rescued her from the pirates to whom the Pisangs had taken her.

How had his prospects altered in a few days!

The trimly-built "Sea-horse" was floating like a helpless log upon the water.

He did not think that his life or those of his companions were in danger.

There was a chance of making land, which Ayoub declared solemnly could not be far off.

All at once a pale, thin, skeleton figure crept up the main hatch.

It walked with difficulty, and, as it neared Jack, the latter exclaimed—

"Hunston!"

He had not gone near him or spoken to him while he was recovering from his privations, though he had caused every attention to be paid him, so that he wanted for nothing.

"Harkaway," Hunston said, in a hollow voice, "I am better now, and I have come to thank you for caring for me as you did."

"Don't say anything about that," exclaimed Jack.

"But I must. I have heard from Harvey how you picked me up and took me in."

"Glad of it," said Jack.

"No, you are not glad. I know you would much rather you had not met me, but you are a kind-hearted English fellow, and behaved as you thought you ought to."

"You might do as much for me some day," suggested Jack.

"Wrong again," replied Hunston. "If I had seen you adrift in a boat, I should not have stirred a finger to save you."

"You speak plainly, anyhow."

"I do, and I say what I mean. You have the advantage over me in generosity and good-nature, if that is any gratification to you."

"Yes; it is. I'd rather be thought a decent fellow than a brute," replied Jack.

"I don't care what people think of me. I've got over that weakness long ago."

"More's the pity."

"Perhaps, but if a man's hardened he can't be worried by scruples of conscience. I have just been snatched from the brink of the grave. I was at my last gasp."

"Yes."

"And I don't thank you for saving me," replied Hunston, whose malicious eyes twinkled with malignity as he spoke.

"I don't want you to," replied Jack.

"The fact is, Harkaway, I'm not a humbug, I never was. You can't accuse me of being a sham. I was always straightforward."

"I can't say that. You've done a lot of dirty things," answered Jack. "But you are ill and weak, and I would rather not argue with you while you are in that state."

"That be bothered. I should show the same spirit if I were dying," Hunston said. "Talk to me, or put me in my boat and cast me adrift once more."

Jack gazed at him with astonishment.

"Put me in the boat. I'm in your power," continued Hunston.

"No; I won't do that."

"Listen, then. I'm your enemy still, though I thank you for saving me. That's candid, isn't it?"

"Very much so," said Jack. "But look here, old fellow, if we can't be friends, the world is wide enough for both of us. I'll take care of you, and put you ashore wherever you like."

"You haven't much choice," said Hunston, with a sneer. "Your ship isn't the vessel it was when you stole it."

"Stole it!" repeated Jack indignantly.

"Yes."

"I only took it from the mutineers, and intend to return it to the owners."

"Oh, of course; your intentions are highly virtuous,"

said Hunston. "But while I am on board, am I to consider myself a prisoner?"

"No; you can do what you like."

"Then I shan't trouble you any more; and as soon as I can get away, I shall."

As he finished speaking, Hunston walked away and amused himself by talking to Ayoub, who was again at the wheel.

Something he said seemed to excite the Arab's attention, as they were soon engaged in earnest conversation.

"He's a beast," said Jack, half aloud.

"Who's a beast?" exclaimed a voice at his elbow.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JACK KEEPS HIS EYE ON AYOUB.

It was Harvey who spoke.

"Who's the beast?" repeated Jack. "Why, Hunston. He's not a bit thankful for being saved. I thought he would be. When I rescued him from the mutineers, he did say, 'thank you.'"

"Then," replied Harvey, "the fear of death was present to his mind. Now the case is different. He knows very well he's right, and can afford to be cheeky."

"What's he saying to Ayoub, I wonder?" asked Jack.

"There is some villany on, I'll bet."

"Lieutenant Skeffington warned me against Ayoub, and told me to keep my eye on him."

"Do it, then. It's my advice too," said Harvey.

"I wish I could hear what they are saying."

"So do I."

"Can't you fox them in some way?" said Jack.

"Not now," replied Harvey. "They would see me and stop talking. I'll tell you how to manage it, though."

"How?"

"I'll go up and stand close to Ayoub, ask him some questions and so on. Hunston will go away, and they'll meet again later, when we can watch."

"Good again, Dick; I always said you were a genius," said Jack.

Harvey went up to the wheel, and, as he had expected, Hunston walked away, going down to his berth, from which he did not emerge till the evening.

It was with difficulty that Ayoub could, with the badly-broken rudder, keep the ship before the wind.

But he contrived to steer somehow, and ere nightfall land was discovered.

Great were the rejoicings of the crew, more especially when the mouth of the river was seen, and Ayoub declared that it was the very one they were in search of.

"In four-and-twenty hours, crippled as we are," said the pilot, "we shall be anchored near the City of the Golden Towers."

There was no further danger from the elements, for the storm had altogether subsided.

Harvey, who was worn out, went to his berth and slept soundly.

Jack, however, was watching Hunston.

Darkness had fallen and all was still, when he heard Hunston leave the cabin in which he was berthed, and go on deck.

He followed.

Ayoub was standing amidships, looking at the crescent moon, just rising in the heavens.

"Is it you, my son?" he exclaimed, as Hunston touched him on the shoulder.

"Did I not say I would meet you when the moon rose at this spot?" replied Hunston.

"You did."

"You hate these white men, and so do I; as far as that we agreed this morning. We were interrupted in our conversation."

"My son," replied the Arab, "I was formerly the most famous pirate in the City of the Golden Towers, but I was cast on the island of Limbi, and seeing no means of getting back to my friends, unless I braved the perils of a voyage which was nearly fatal to you, I determined to wait."

"You settled on the island?"

"Yes; and when this boy, Harkaway, asked me to steer him to the Golden City, I was more than glad to do so. It was the wish of my heart. I have heard all

about you, and I know that your friends, the Pisangs, have gone to the Malay pirates in large numbers."

"They have."

"With them they bore a lovely English maiden," continued Ayoub.

"You know that?" cried Hunston.

"And more than that, you love her. Harkaway loves her, and there is a hatred between you."

"You are right there," Hunston said, between his teeth. "The more he does for me, the more I seem to detest him. The reason I have come to speak to you is that I do not think you mean to keep faith with him."

"Can I trust you?" said Ayoub.

"I'll take any oath you like."

"What are oaths to men like you and I?" replied the Arab, contemptuously.

"You must have sense enough to know that you can trust me, and if I can give you a hand in any villany, I'm ready to do so."

"I don't know that you can do anything," replied Ayoub, "yet it is a relief to have some one to talk to. The ship is a wreck, and scarcely worthy of the pirates' attention."

"Are we near the pirates?" Hunston asked.

"Yes, they will be here soon. I shall hoist a red light at midnight, to show them there are friends on board."

"What then?"

"When they board the ship they will spare the lives of all who are near the red light, the rest they will slay."

"There will be an end of Harkaway then," said Hunston, with a savage smile.

"And all his friends," replied Ayoub.

Jack was listening intently to this conversation. "The fiends!" he muttered.

"You shall marry the white maiden, and be a great chief among the pirates," continued Ayoub.

"That will suit me exactly. I should like to be a pirate king."

"I held a high position among them," the Arab went on, "before I was wrecked off Limbi. Often have I longed to return to the scene of youth and manhood. But the voyage was too perilous to be undertaken alone."

"Are the pirates Malays?"

"Not all. They have men of all nations with them. French, English, Spanish and American. We are nearing the mouth of the river now. Can not you see under the bluff headlands on the right some lights dancing like fire-flies?"

"Yes."

"Those are the lights of the pirates' proas riding at anchor. There is a safe anchorage there, and many ships remain there to guard the entrance to the river."

"There must be a lot of them from the number of lights," cried Hunston.

"Twice six, and full of armed men. What chance has this disabled ship of contending against the pirate fleet?"

"Have they seen us yet?"

"Not yet. We are hull down in the water," said Ayoub, who talked in the Limbian language, that being perfectly intelligible to Hunston.

"Have you got a red light ready?"

"I have."

"Will they recognise it?" continued Hunston.

"They will," replied Ayoub with a smile. "I used to go out in a boat on the look-out for a passing ship, telling the captain I was a pilot, who would navigate his vessel through the dangerous channels with which the coast of the Malay peninsula abounds, and when I got them here I showed the red light, which means blood."

Jack shuddered.

"They will say, 'Heaven is good to us,'" continued the Arab; "'our old friend Ayoub, the mighty, has come back again. Blood will run like water. Come, my brethren, let us go to Ayoub, and slay the disciples of the cross.'"

"You are sure they won't kill you and me by mistake?" said Hunston.

"Our lives are safe in my hands; though, had you not spoken to me to-day, yours would have been sacrificed with the rest."

As he spoke, the infamous wretch who had been all along planning this massacre of the officers and crew of the "Sea-horse," took up a lamp he had concealed behind some spars.

He held it up in the air, saying, "Behold the signal."

The next moment Jack had levelled a pistol at his head, and crying—

"Rascally Arab, take that," he fired.

Ayoub, shot through the forehead, uttered the single word "Allah!" and fell forward at Hunston's feet.

There was another barrel in the pistol undischarged.

Jack played restlessly with the trigger.

"I've a deuced good mind to give you the contents of number two, Mister Hunston," he said.

Hunston's eyes fell, and he trembled a little.

"Ha!" said Jack noticing this, "does the fear of death come upon you after all?"

"I am weak and ill. You forget what troubles I have gone through lately. It's the body that trembles, not the spirit," Hunston replied.

"Your companion revealed himself in his true colours at last, and he died the death of a traitor."

"Shoot away, if you are going to shoot," cried Hunston; "only don't stand jawing at me. You're as bad as the chaplain of a gaol preaching a condemned sermon."

Jack's hand still held the pistol, and the least movement of his finger would have hurled Hunston into eternity.

He hesitated, however, to fire.

The recollections of the old days at school came over him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ATTACKED BY PIRATES.

THE sudden death of Ayoub, and the consequent collapse of his treacherous plans, alarmed Hunston.

He saw that Harkaway was very angry, and he expected to be shot every moment.

"At least I will have a struggle for it," he muttered between his clenched teeth.

Rushing upon Jack, he endeavored to wrench the pistol out of his hand.

Had he succeeded in doing so, he would undoubtedly have shot him.

But Jack would not release his hold.

They swayed backwards and forwards.

All at once the trigger of the pistol was accidentally pulled, and, as the muzzle happened to be presented against Hunston, he received the charge in his left arm.

The injured limb hung helplessly by his side.

He staggered against the bulwarks, pale as death, and cursing his ill-luck.

"It was your own fault; you would have it," exclaimed Jack.

Ben Blunt, attracted by the firing, advanced, and examined the injured limb.

"It must come off," he said.

"What?" cried Hunston. "Lose my arm?"

"There is no help for it," replied Ben.

"Be a one-armed man all my life!"

The expression of Hunston's face, as he uttered these words, was fiendish in the extreme.

"You ought to think yourself lucky you have escaped with your life," remarked Harvey.

"I'll be revenged on you, Harkaway for this," cried Hunston, writhing with pain.

Jack turned contemptuously from him.

"Wherever you are—in whatever quarter of the globe—I am more than ever your enemy, and I will find you out," continued Hunston.

He would have said more, but, faint from loss of blood and severe pain, he sank on the deck insensible.

"Take him below, Ben, and see to him," said Jack.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"And some of you fellows throw that carrion overboard," added Jack, pointing to the dead body of Ayoub.

His orders were obeyed, and Ben carried Hunston below.

Ben Blunt had a rough knowledge of surgery, having been in more than one action, and with Harvey's help, he amputated Hunston's arm just below the shoulder.

A sharp knife and a saw were all that was required, with a bit of silk for a tourniquet to take up the veins.

Bandaging it round afterwards, he left the wretched young man to go to sleep.

His thoughts were not pleasant.

For the remainder of his life Hunston would be a one-armed man.

His wickedness had been punished at last.

A good look-out was kept on board, and the best weapons that could be found were supplied to the crew.

Jack anticipated an attack from the pirates.

Nor was he mistaken.

About midnight they with difficulty made out half-a-dozen heavily manned boats rowing towards them.

"All hands forward to repel boarders," exclaimed Jack.

Directly he heard this order, Mr. Mole disappeared.

The remainder of those on board, however, evinced every inclination for the fight.

Steadily the pirates came on.

The movement of the oars in the row-locks became more distinct.

Dividing into two parties, the pirates began the attack on each side simultaneously.

With their cruel sharp knives in their mouths they swarmed up the sides.

Volley after volley was fired at them.

Many fell back into the boats or the sea mortally wounded.

Others immediately took their places.

Jack fought valiantly.

A stalwart Malay singled him out, and after a few attempts succeeded in cutting him down.

Jack fell to the deck, badly wounded.

The fall of their leader damped the ardour of the English crew.

In vain Harvey strove to lead them forward.

They were overpowered by numbers, and surrendered at discretion.

Ben Blunt was stabbed to the heart, and his body stiffened in the moonlight.

Harvey had a flesh wound in the leg, and could only limp about.

When the fighting was over, the Malays ceased the work of slaughter.

It was the custom of the pirates to take as many prisoners as they could, in order to obtain ransom.

Monday had fought valiantly, and, strange to say, was unhurt.

Perhaps in the confusion the Malays, from his dark skin, mistook him for one of their own party.

The faithful fellow attended to his young masters and bound up their wounds.

He spoke to the pirates and told them they were great chiefs.

This made the Malays treat them with great consideration.

Mr. Mole was captured and fastened to Monday with a chain.

Jack and Harvey were conveyed below, and the latter did all that lay in his power for his old friend.

When the pirates had cleared the deck of the dead, they began to tow the ship to the mouth of the river.

All night long they continued to work and by morning the vessel was moored alongside a landing-place, in the city of the Golden Towers.

Harvey was disappointed at the first view of the city.

It was like most oriental towns; an assemblage of narrow dirty streets.

In the centre rose a temple which had a dome, surrounded by twelve towers or minarets.

These were covered with gilding.

It was this temple that gave the pirates' stronghold the romantic and fascinating name of the City of the Golden Towers.

Ill as Hunston was, he contrived to speak to the pirate chiefs.

The result was that he was not classed with the other prisoners.

Probably he referred to the Pisang chiefs, who had left their own country and joined the pirates.

At all events he was treated with distinction, while Harkaway, Harvey, Monday and Mr. Mole were removed to a loathsome dungeon in the city.

Jack lay upon a heap of mouldy straw, Harvey by his side.

His wounds were very painful, and he was weak in the extreme.

"I shall never get home again, Dick!" he exclaimed, in a low voice.

"Yes, you will. Eat some of this rice, and drink some water," replied Harvey.

"I can't eat. Give me the water."

He drank copiously, for his blood was hot and feverish.

"They've done for me this time," he moaned.

"What's that you say, Harkaway?" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "Don't give way. Look at my position."

"You're not hurt, sir, as Harkaway is," rejoined Harvey.

"No; but I am suffering the intolerable indignity of being chained to a negro in this stifling vault."

Monday gave the chain a pull.

"Don't do that," cried Mr. Mole; "you'll wrench my leg off."

"Speak Monday civil," replied the black. "It's no good um grumble now. Monday pull um leg off if not quiet."

Mr. Mole groaned dismally.

"I wonder if they will spare our lives?" he said. "Perhaps owing to the way I fought, they will be extra savage against me."

No one took any notice of him, and he continued to grumble to himself.

The position of the little party was anything but agreeable.

Two of them were wounded, and they were confined in a hot, stifling vault; the only air and light they enjoyed penetrating through a little grated window high up in the wall.

Thus a week passed.

Food was brought them regularly every day, but they could glean no information from their gaoler, who refused to answer any questions.

Jack wanted quinine and fresh air to complete his cure, but there did not seem much hope of his obtaining them.

Their despair was at its height when they received a visit which put new life into them.

The gaoler one morning introduced a fairy-like vision, which Jack, from his straw bed, at once recognized.

He made an effort to rise, but was too weak to do so.

"Emily," he murmured, softly.

Her eyes, accustomed to the blinding sun, could not distinguish him in the semi-darkness.

Guided by his voice she ran to the side of the straw bed and sank on her knees.

Seizing his thin, transparent hand, she bedewed it with tears.

"Oh, Jack dear!" she exclaimed. "It is so sad to see you like this; but I would rather meet you thus than not see you at all."

"Thank you, Emily," replied Jack. "I wanted to see you before I died. I can die happy now."

"Die! Are you hurt?"

"I was wounded with a creese when the pirates attacked us. How did you get in here?" he said.

"I live in the palace of the pirate king, and he sent me to you to ask what ransom you could pay," replied Emily.

"Where is Hunston?"

"Very ill. He has had a bad attack of fever, and has been delirious for some days, which is lucky, as he might have done you some harm. All his Pisang friends are here, and he is being taken care of."

"Why have the pirates kept us here so long?" asked Jack.

"I cannot tell exactly," answered Emily. "But I have heard them say that one of Her Majesty's ships has been cruising about the mouth of the river."

"And that has occupied all their time?"

"Exactly."

A ray of hope lighted up Jack's face.

"Dick!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," replied Harvey.

"That ship they speak about must be the one we met, H. M. S. 'Victor,' Commander Dacres."

"I hope to goodness she is," replied Harvey.

"Well, Jack dear, what shall I say to the pirate king?"

"Tell him we've got lots of money at home, and we will ransom ourselves handsomely, as soon as we have means of communicating with our guardians," said Jack.

"Very well."

Suddenly a voice said—

"Young lady!"

It was Mr Mole who spoke.

"Who is that, Jack?" asked Emily.

"Only Mr. Mole."

"One of your friends?"

"The best, truest, and staunchest that Harkaway ever had, miss," replied Mr. Mole.

"Indeed, sir."

"I have shed my blood for him on innumerable occasions, and I will show my magnanimity now."

"That's right, sir," said Harvey.

"Monday," remarked Mr. Mole, "don't pull so hard on that confounded chain; do you hear? You gall my leg."

"Never mind um leg, sare," replied Monday, "go on with the magnanimimums."

"I, young lady, am the proprietor of a tea-garden in China," continued Mr. Mole.

"Yes?" said Emily.

"Tell your pirate friends that I will make them a present of this lovely tea-garden, if they will give us our liberty and let us go."

"Bravo," cried Harvey. "Mole isn't such a bad sort after all."

"When you have occasion to allude to me, Harvey, you will please to address me as Mr. Mole."

"Beg pardon, sir."

"It is granted," replied Mr. Mole, grandly.

Emily spoke a few words to Jack in a low voice, begging him to keep up his spirits, and holding out hopes of speedy liberation.

Then she took her departure.

CHAPTER XXX.

SHELLING THE PIRATE CITY.

"ANGELS' visits are few and far between, and don't last long," said Jack, as if speaking to himself.

"Have I not behaved handsomely, Harkaway?" asked Mr. Mole.

Jack was thinking of Emily, and made no answer.

"Harvey, I appeal to you," continued Mr. Mole.

"You know, sir, that land is not like money. The pirates could never go and claim your land, because you could say who they were, and have them taken up," replied Harvey.

He had been thinking over Mr. Mole's apparent generosity, and the more he considered it, the less he believed in its reality.

Jack remembered what the lieutenant of Her Majesty's ship had told him when he overhauled the "Sea-horse."

Emily's remark about the pirates being worried by a vessel of war, raised his spirits considerably.

When Harvey damped the bandages with water and replaced them over his wounds, Jack said—

"I feel better, Dick."

"That's right, old man. Keep up your pluck," replied Harvey.

"It's so difficult to do that when you're ill. You don't know what a change illness makes in a fellow. It seems to take all the go out of him."

"I know it does. I was ill once—had a fever."

"But I feel different now. Emily has put new life into me."

"I thought she would, bless her!" said Harvey.

"And I don't believe we shall be prisoners much longer," continued Jack.

"Why not?"

"The 'Victor' has found the pirates out, and they will shell the city."

"It's an advantage, then, to be shut up in this vault."

"Well," said Jack, "so far as escaping the effects of the bombardment, it is. I know the British government have been trying for some time to exterminate the nest of pirates who have infested these seas so long."

While he was speaking, a loud booming was heard.

The whiz of a shell made itself distinctly audible as it flew over the devoted city.

There was a crash of falling masonry, and then for a minute all was still.

"By Jove, they're at it!" cried Harvey.

"Sooner than I expected," said Jack, with a quiet smile playing over his emaciated face.

Presently the sound was repeated, and it continued at intervals of half a minute.

The crashes were incessant.

It appeared that by morning there would not be one stone left standing on another in the famous City of the Golden Towers.

"That's splendid practice. How well they fire," said Jack, delightedly.

"Hurrah for the royal navy, and our rattling blue jackets!" exclaimed Harvey.

"What is all this hubbub?" asked Mr. Mole, trembling all over.

"The British fighting the pirates. They have found them out at last," replied Jack.

"How do you know?"

"I'm sure of it. We shall be free in a few hours, sir."

"That is good news. I hope this casement is shot-proof," said Mr. Mole, adding, "Monday!"

"Sare?" replied the black.

"Don't pull so confoundedly hard on that chain."

"Can't help um, sare."

"You drag on it."

"Monday do um war dance, sare."

"Well, then, kindly postpone it, because it is painful to my feelings, and my skin is tender."

"All right, sare," replied Monday, "him stop um dance."

The bombardment had continued for four hours without a break.

Jack was anxious about Emily.

Suddenly he was relieved by seeing the door open, and his darling rush in, her hair dishevelled and showing signs of terror.

"Oh! Jack," she said, "I've had such an escape."

"From what, dear?" he asked.

"The city is on fire in a dozen places, and the pirates are leaving in crowds."

"Is it the 'Victor'?"

"I don't know the name of the ship, but it is a British man-of-war, and it is giving it the pirates finely."

"Hurrah!" cried Harvey.

"The pirate chief wanted to take me with him up the country somewhere, and make me his wife," she said.

"Beast!" ejaculated Jack.

"I escaped and ran through the burning city. How I missed being shot, or crushed by the falling masonry, or burnt, I don't know, but I thought it best to come to you."

"Did the guards let you in?"

"There are no guards; they have all run away. I

merely slipped back the bolt, and here I am," she replied.

"Thank Heaven you are near me," rejoined Jack. "Sit down by my side, and let me hold your hand in mine, dear."

She did so.

Crash, crash, continued the shells.

H. M. S. "Victor" was in earnest this time.

The destruction is terrible when an unfortified town is bombarded by all the appliances of modern science.

At the expiration of about six hours, as well as the boys could guess, the firing ceased.

"Dick," said Jack, "are you well enough to walk?"

"I can limp about a bit," answered Harvey.

"Go then to the riverside with something white, and let the English know that British prisoners are confined here."

"All right, I'll try."

"Shall I go with him?" asked Emily.

"No, my precious one," answered Jack, "I can't part with you; sit still where you are."

She pressed his hand affectionately.

Harvey was at a loss for something of a white colour.

He, as well as the rest of the party, had a handkerchief and a shirt.

These, however, had long ago ceased to bear any resemblance to white.

If any colour at all, they were black.

"To sally forth with such a thing, would be to hoist the black flag," as Harvey said, with a laugh.

Emily blushed.

"If you don't mind," she said, "you can have a bit of my petticoat. It is clean, for I washed it out myself, yesterday."

"You, Emily?" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes; and I'm not ashamed of it. There are no laundresses here, for the best possible reason."

"What's that?"

"The people don't wear any clothes to speak about"

Everyone laughed at this answer.

"Now don't look at me and make fun," she went on.

"As if we could do such a thing," rejoined Harvey.

"Oh, I know what you boys are," she answered smiling.

Turning round, she lifted up her dress and dexterously tore off a part of her petticoat, which she handed to Harvey.

"If you lose that, I'll kill you, Dick," said Jack. "It's more precious than cloth of gold."

"Don't be foolish, Jack," said Emily.

"I'll guard it with my life," answered Harvey, "and if I'm asked what flag it is, I shall say it's the flag of all nations."

"All nations?" repeated Emily.

"Yes; every man strikes his flag to a petticoat," said Harvey.

He had no difficulty in opening the door and going up the mouldy steps which led from the dungeon. He reached the open air.

A strange spectacle met his gaze.

The city, a few hours before proud and wealthy, was literally a heap of ruins.

Flames shot up into the air in different directions, and a thick pall of smoke obscured the sky.

No one was to be seen.

The city was deserted by its inhabitants.

He had not picked his way far between the *débris*, when a shot went by his ear and pinged against a wall.

"Hi!" he said. "Rule Britannia. Don't shoot a countryman."

He held up his strange flag.

The next moment he was face to face with a party of marines.

"Who are you, my lad?" asked the officer in command.

"British prisoner, sir; wounded in the leg, and taken out of a merchantman with others by the pirates."

"How many are there of you?"

"Five in all, and one's a lady," replied Harvey.

"In that case, I had better get you out of this and put you aboard. Lead on to the prison," said the officer; adding, "now, my lads, keep your weather eye open for an ambush. By your right quick march!"

"Slow march, if you please, sir," said Harvey.

"Why?"

"Didn't I tell you I had a game leg? Give me an arm. It's uncommonly stiff. I can tell you."

"Ah, I forgot that; lean on me," said the officer. "Those creeses of the Malays give nasty wounds."

"That they do," exclaimed Harvey, limping along.

With a wildly beating heart he led the way to the dungeon.

Hope dawned in his breast once more.

Their troubles were nearly over.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON BOARD H. M. S. "VICTOR."

In less than an hour the prisoners were removed on board the "Victor."

Here all the surgeon attended to Jack's wounds, and were treated with the utmost kindness and consideration.

It was a pleasant and happy change.

A large quantity of valuable property was recovered from the burning city, and this put the sailors in a good temper, as they could look forward to prize-money.

The pirates being thoroughly beaten and their city destroyed, the "Victor" dropped down the river.

It was the captain's intention to land the captives at Singapore.

His cruise was not yet over, and he could not leave the China Seas.

At Singapore no doubt a vessel would give them a passage to England.

Good food, fresh air, and excellent surgical attendance was all that Jack and Harvey required.

They soon recovered, and went about as usual.

Emily was the pet and darling of the whole ship's company, but she had only eyes for Jack.

There was one man on board Jack did not like.

He was tall and thin, with dark, flashing eyes.

His father was a merchant at Singapore, and a friend of the captain of the "Victor."

The young man, who was about nineteen, not being in very good health, had been received on board the ship as the guest of the captain, and taken for a cruise.

His name was Frank Davis.

He fell violently in love with Emily, and persecuted her with his attentions on all occasions.

Being an idle man, and having no duty to do on board the ship, he was able to roam about when and where he liked.

Emily did not encourage him, but she did not like to be rude.

Consequently Jack often saw them together and his face flushed as he saw Frank Davis bending over her.

Pointing him out to Harvey, Jack said—

"I shall punch that snob's head some day."

"I wouldn't," replied Harvey. "You are not strong, and we shall soon make Singapore, when we shall get rid of him."

"It's a nuisance to think I have got another fellow to worry me, just when Hunston is wiped out and we have made an end to all our troubles."

"Do you think Hunston is dead?"

"I fancy he must have died in the burning city. Ill as he was, he could scarcely escape," replied Jack.

"At all events, he is not on board this ship. That's one comfort," remarked Harvey.

Jack watched Mr. Davis carefully, and in spite of Harvey's advice, sought an opportunity to pick a quarrel with him.

Davis, however, was very civil to him and seemed to try to avoid a rupture.

Mr. Mole went about from one to another of the crew, and recounted his valiant exploits among the savages.

Monday caused the sailors great amusement.

He begged and borrowed from them a complete sailor's dress, and was very proud of it.

The "Victor" had to go out of her course to chase some pirate craft.

Sighting an island, a boat was lowered to go and obtain a supply of water.

Monday ran up to Jack in great excitement.

"Mast' Jack!" he exclaimed.

"Well," replied Jack.

"That's Limbi. That's my island. I know um well."

"Is it?"

"Yes. You ask the Tuan captain if he let you and me go and land with the sailor men."

"Would you like to see the island once more?" asked Jack.

"Very much like, sare," replied Monday.

"All right. I'll go and get permission."

Jack went to the captain, stated the case, and asked leave for himself and Monday to accompany the boat.

Leave was at once granted.

They embarked in the boat, and the Limbians came to receive them.

When they saw Jack and Monday they made a great feast in their honor, and would not allow the English sailors to do any work, but filled the casks with water for them.

They went up to the city, and Jack called upon Alfura and Ambonia.

He was asked a variety of questions about Mr. Mole, who, he said, had remained in the pirate city.

"Will he come back?" asked Ambonia.

"Oh, yes," replied Jack. "He is very anxious to see you again. Can I take him any message?"

"We have a surprise for him," said Alfura and Ambonia in a breath.

"What?"

"Two little babies; such beauties. Mine is a boy, we call Isaac, and Alfura's is a girl, named after her."

Jack whistled.

"Two kids," he exclaimed. "Mr. Mole expected this."

"Did he?" asked Alfura.

"Yes; and he wants you to send the children to him. Cannot the nurse take them in a basket?"

"We should not like to part with them; but if it is their father's wish——"

"It is," rejoined Jack.

"Then the dear little Innocents must go," replied Ambonia.

She went into an adjoining room, and the nurse who had charge of them brought them in for Jack's inspection.

They were not quite so dusky as their mothers, but there was a half-caste tinge about their complexions.

"Bless 'em!" said Jack.

He kissed their foreheads.

This gracious act quite won the hearts of the mothers.

The infants were placed in a basket, covered over.

On the breast of one Jack put a piece of paper, on which he wrote "The gentle Isaac."

On the other he placed the inscription, "The lovely Alfura."

And on the top of the basket he wrote—"A present from Limbi, for a good Mole."

"Now, nurse," he said, "carry that down to the boat. You will come with us to take care of the precious babbies."

"Have they far to go?" asked Alfura.

"Only a few days' voyage."

"And will Mr. Mole come soon?" sighed Ambonia.

"Before another moon has passed," replied Jack.

The mothers began to cry, and Jack cleared out, making for the boat, where the crew were waiting for him.

When the lieutenant in charge asked who the old woman was, Jack informed him that she was taking something on board for Mr. Mole, and it would be all right.

The children, having been well fed, slept placidly.

At length the boat reached the ship, and the basket was taken up and placed on the quarter-deck.

"You stand back till you're wanted," said Jack to the nurse.

The captain and officers crowded round the basket.

The crew looked on at a distance.

Jack saluted the captain, and the captain saluted Jack.

"What's this, Mr. Harkaway?" asked Captain Dacre.

"A present for Mr. Mole, sir," replied Jack.

"Pass the word for Mr. Mole," said the captain.

The word was passed and Mr. Mole emerged from the captain's servant's cabin, where all the good things were kept.

He wiped his mouth as he came out and he exhaled a smell of brandy.

"You did me the honor to send for me, sir," he said.

"Your former friends have sent you something," replied the captain.

"Ah! indeed. They remember my valorous feats. This is kind of them, and also proper."

"Will you open the basket now?"

"I will, sir, with your permission."

Mr. Mole stooped down and untied the fastenings of the basket.

The cloth was thrown back, and the children revealed to view.

Mr. Mole staggered, and uttered a groan.

"The gentle Isaac and the lovely Alfura," he murmured.

The officers burst into a roar of laughter, and even Captain Dacre himself could not refrain from smiling.

Suddenly Mr. Mole's manner changed.

He grew furious.

"Who has done this? Who has played me this base trick?" he cried.

"They are your children, sir," replied Harkaway. "You know you married two wives in Limbi, and these children are the consequence of the rash act."

"I'll have none of them! Away with the reptiles; the vermin; the little black images!"

"I appeal to these gentlemen if the sleeping innocents are not the exact likeness of their father," said Jack.

"Into the sea with them," cried Mr. Mole.

He grasped the basket and would have cast them over the ship's side, had not the nurse run forward and seized him by the ear.

"Oh! my ear, my ear! The she-fiend; she'll wring it off," vociferated Mole, dropping the basket.

The children began to scream.

Leaving her hold of his ear, the nurse attended to the children.

Mole danced up and down like a madman.

"Mr. Harkaway," said the captain, "this may be a very good joke, but we cannot be burdened with this sort of live stock."

"Beg pardon, sir. Didn't wish to put you to any inconvenience," said Jack.

"Possibly not."

"Fact is, sir, I've got a feeling heart," said Jack.

"Every sailor ought to have one."

"Mr. Mole, sir, has deserted his wives, and the poor infants will be half orphans, if——"

"Yes, yes," said the captain, rather impatiently, as he dectected a half twinkle in Jack's eye; "we know all about that; but you have given me the trouble of again

lowering a boat to send these children and their nurse to the shore."

"Won't you have the half orphans, sir?"

"Not on board this ship; it is absurd to ask me. Any one would take you for their father, you are so anxious about them."

"I, sir? No, sir. Wouldn't do such things," answered Jack, with a broad grin.

"Go forward, Mr. Harkaway if you please," said Captain Dacre, sternly. "We have had enough of this nonsense."

Jack retired, whistling—

"It's nice to be a father."

When Mr. Mole saw that the captain was going to send the gentle Isaac and his sister back, he recovered himself.

"Remove the brats at once, sailors," he said, "and you shall have a crown to drink my health."

A boat was soon lowered, and the nurse, with the "precious tits," as Jack called them, put into it.

"This proper and decided act of the captain's has saved me the trouble and work of buying some vermin-destroying powder," muttered Mr. Mole. "Ugh! the black beasts."

"They're yours, sir," whispered Jack at his elbow.

"Harkaway, this is a painful joke," replied Mr. Mole.

"Bad for the poor half orphans, sir."

"You have exposed me to the ridicule of the officers and crew of the vessel."

"Never be ashamed of your own, sir," said Jack.

"The captain has behaved like a gentleman. Look at that boat conveying the vermin to the shore. It is a pleasant sight."

Mr. Mole sighed deeply.

"You're a gay deceiver, sir; but I shouldn't wonder if Ambonia followed you to England."

"If she does, I'll——"

Mr. Mole stopped abruptly.

It did not exactly occur to him what he could do in the event of such an unpleasant contingency.

Jack did not worry him any more, though he had many a laugh over the affair with Harvey.

The ship went on to Singapore, and there landed the little party.

Monday had made up his mind to go to England.

As Jack and Mr. Mole were the richest, they drew bills on England, and got them discounted to pay their expenses.

Before the "Victor" left, they made the captain a handsome present.

Jack took care of Emily, who, now her father and mother were dead, was a penniless orphan.

They all lodged at the same hotel.

Monday insisted on being Jack and Harvey's servant, but he would not do a thing for Mr. Mole.

"He one humbug, sare, that what Mist' Mole is," he used to say.

The boys secured a passage to England in a fast steamer, which was to sail in a few days after taking in cargo.

"Our worries are all over now, Dick," said Jack, gleefully.

"About time they were," replied Harvey.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JACK BECOMES JEALOUS.

We have said that Emily was very grateful to Jack for all he had done for her.

Had it not been for him she might have endured an intolerable captivity among the pirates.

She might even have been compelled to become Hunston's wife.

It was not much she could do in return, so she said.

But Jack thought it a great deal.

She could give him her heart, and promise to be his wife some day when he was a man.

"Whatever shall I do, Jack dear," she said, "when I get back to England? I have no parents now—no home."

His eyes filled with tears.

"Stay with my father and mother, Emily," replied Jack. "They will make you happy for my sake."

"Oh, I don't like to do that. I'll go out as governess."

"You shall not," Jack said, emphatically. "I should like to see anyone bullying my darling. You'll stay with us."

"If you think your friends will let me——"

"I know they will; so don't fret about that, my pet."

"I have often thought lately, Jack," she exclaimed, "that it was very fortunate you were among the savages."

"We've had our trials, Emmy, but it doesn't matter so long as we've pulled through, does it?"

"No," she answered; "that is the great thing: and I am so happy to know that you love me."

Mr. Mole came in just then, and interrupted any further conversation of a private nature.

"I'm going home with you, Harkaway," he said.

"I always thought you were, sir."

"No; I had it in my mind to proceed to China, but I shall sell my tea-garden."

"Sell it?" replied Jack.

"As soon as possible. I have had enough of savage life. I went forth 'strange countries for to see,' as the song has it, and I have seen enough of them."

"I think you have come to a wise determination, Mr. Mole," said Emily.

"I cannot doubt that I have, my dear, if you say so."

"As for Harvey and myself, we shall be glad to have you with us," said Jack.

"My idea," exclaimed Mr. Mole, "is to go to some university town."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; I am fond of teaching, and I shall establish myself as a private tutor."

"But you have an income?"

"I dare say, when my tea-garden is sold, I shall have two or three hundred a year. Well, with that and the proceeds of my teaching, my life will glide calmly on."

"Capital, sir," exclaimed Jack.

"Calmly on," continued Mr. Mole, "until I go over to the majority, which means the greater number, or those who have gone before to their everlasting home."

"You are becoming sentimental, Mr. Mole," remarked Emily.

"I feel so, my dear young lady. When a man has come to a great determination, and settled a crisis in his life, he ought to feel happy."

The skipper of the homeward-bound sent word to say that his ship would not be ready to sail for at least three weeks.

He had a quantity of cargo to take on board, and this would delay his start.

There was nothing for it but to make themselves as comfortable as possible at their hotel.

When the "Victor" sailed, Frank Davis, of whom we have spoken as an admirer of Emily, remained behind.

His father was a rich merchant.

The sea air had done him good, and he was now able to stay on shore and resume his ordinary duties. Not that he did much work.

He would stroll down to the counting-house with a cigar in his mouth, stay for an hour or two, and then go away again.

Frank Davis had been born in England, though most of his life had been passed in Singapore.

He had long, dark hair, regular features, and a keen, flashing eye.

Altogether he was not bad looking, though his face wore a conceited and haughty expression. Jack hated him.

Having made acquaintance with our little party on board ship, he thought himself privileged to visit them at their hotel, which he did very frequently.

He talked to Mr. Mole, and made himself very agreeable to Emily, but scarcely condescended to speak to Jack and Harvey.

One evening he had been for more than an hour turning over Emily's music while she sang and played.

Jack was biting his lips with vexation, for he really loved Emily, and did not like to see her encourage, as he thought, this comparative stranger.

At length she rose and went to the sofa.

Jack placed himself by the side of her immediately.

Davis walked up to Mr. Mole, and began to talk about the higher mathematics.

"Emily," said Jack, "do you find the society of that fellow Davis so very entertaining?"

"He praises my playing, and turns my music for me," answered Emily.

"Couldn't I do the same?"

"Of course; only you and Harvey get together and talk about old times, and never come near me. I must talk to some one. What am I to do?"

"I thought I wasn't wanted," said Jack.

"Nonsense!" she said, with a musical laugh. "You're not going to get jealous in your old age."

"I am jealous."

"You stupid old Jack. You deserve that I should scold you."

"But look here, haven't you been going on anyhow with that ugly brute, Davis?" asked Jack.

"I'm sure he isn't ugly, and he knows how to make himself very agreeable to the ladies," replied Emily, who, like all pretty women, was a tyrant, and wished to torment him a little.

"That is as much as to say I'm not."

"No, it isn't."

"And you like him best? Very well; I'm glad you've told me," said Jack, flushing angrily.

"Now, Jack, I shall be very cross with you indeed, if you run away with a mistaken idea like that," replied Emily.

"All right, you have said quite enough," said Jack, savagely.

He got up and walked away.

"Dick," exclaimed Emily, appealing to Harvey.

"What is it?" asked Dick.

"Do, please, go after Jack. He's in such a rage, and I'm afraid there will be a quarrel between him and—and Mr. Davis."

"Shouldn't wonder if there was," replied Harvey.

"Why?"

"If it had been me, I'd have punched his ugly head long ago."

"I haven't done anything wrong," replied Emily.

"I don't know about wrong," replied Harvey. "You've been carrying on anyhow with that fellow."

"I was only civil to him."

"I'm Jack's friend, you know, Miss Emily," continued

Harvey, "and I don't like to see him made a fool of. He's awfully fond of you."

"So am I of him," she said.

"Well, you don't go the right way to show it," Harvey answered bluntly.

"Never mind; I will explain all to Jack presently, only go after him, will you, please, and tell him how sorry I am. I don't want a quarrel. Mr. Davis might hurt him."

Harvey laughed scornfully.

"Hurt him? Hurt Jack!" he said, contemptuously.

"Yes."

"Why, Jack wouldn't make a mouthful of him. He's bigger than either of us, but I should be sorry if his face came against Jack's fist. Hurt Jack! Not much. Don't fret about that."

"Will you go and speak to Jack?" urged Emily.

"If you wish it, though I'd rather let them alone," replied Harvey. "Mr. Merchant's son is sure to get a jolly good walloping."

"Very well," said Emily, leaning back; "I can see you are both against me."

"Let them alone, I tell you," replied Harvey. "I know what Jack's game is."

"What?"

"He is too much of the gentleman to have a row in his own room, with a fellow who is his guest."

"I hope so," said Emily; "but what will he do?"

"Oh, square him up somehow. Let them alone," replied Harvey.

Frank Davis now took his leave, the fact being that Mr. Mole rather bored him with cube roots and one thing and another.

Emily rather distantly wished him good night.

She had not intended to encourage his advances, and wished to draw back as soon as she saw Harkaway was annoyed.

A little way from the hotel Davis met Jack and said—

"Good-night. I wondered where you had gone to."

"I came out here to speak to you," replied Jack.

"That is funny. I have spent the evening in your room, and you have had every opportunity of talking to me."

"I did not choose to talk to you upstairs."

"And I don't choose to talk to you in the street.

That's the difference," exclaimed Davis, in his usual sneering manner.

"Excuse me; you cannot help yourself."

"Oh! but I can," replied Davis, walking on.

Jack ran forward, and placed himself before him.

"Really, Mr. Harkaway, this is very strange behaviour," said Davis, finding himself stopped.

"Not at all."

"Perhaps you have lived so long amongst savages that you forget how to behave yourself amongst gentlemen."

This remark stung Jack.

"I simply want to tell you that I wish your visits to cease at my hotel," he said; "that's plain enough."

"I don't come to see you," said Davis insolently.

"That is a remark which if you dare to repeat, I will knock you down for," cried Jack.

"I have no reason to say it again," replied Davis, "since you have heard it once, and seem to appreciate the force of it."

Jack's fingers itched to strike him, but he restrained himself.

"Who do you come to see?" he asked.

"Use your eyes, and you will find out."

Jack felt inclined to spring upon him, but at that moment Monday came up.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Mist' Harvey, him send me, sare," replied Monday; "him think you want me."

"So I do," replied Jack.

"What um for, sare?"

"Kick this fellow in front of me. I won't dirty my hands with him at present."

"Mist' Davis, sare? Kick um friend?" said Monday, in surprise.

"He's no friend of mine. Wire in!"

Davis looked alarmed.

"I warn you," he said, "that if this black fellow touches me, I will have him punished."

"You can do your little worst, my boy," answered Jack, adding, "go in, Monday; let him have it."

Monday did not hesitate any longer.

Jack's word was law to him.

He administered several hearty kicks and cuffs to Davis,

who ran swiftly up the street, with Jack's derisive laughter ringing in his ears.

"Monday kick him well, sare?" asked the black.

"Beautiful!"

"Um proper kicks, sare?"

"Lovely, Monday. I'll buy you a new hat," replied Jack still laughing heartily.

The way in which the dandified merchant's son ran away pleased him immensely.

Returning to his hotel, he found Emily had gone to bed, saying she had a bad headache.

Mr. Mole and Harvey were at supper.

Jack joined them and told them how he had made Monday treat Davis.

"Impetuous as usual, Harkaway," said Mr. Mole. "Just like you."

"Why shouldn't I, sir? He tried to spoon on Emily," replied Jack.

"She should have snubbed him. You were wrong, and it is unfortunate just now."

"Why, sir?"

"Because we have been put up for election at the English club, of which Davis is a member. Two black balls in the ballot exclude, and he may so vote and influence his friends as to get us shut out."

"I didn't think of that."

"Of course you didn't. You bull-at-a-gate fellows never do think of consequences."

"I dare say we shall pull through, sir," remarked Harvey.

"We may; but it would not be pleasant during the short time we stay here to be shut out of the only club in the place, and for people to say that we were blackballed at the ballot. You really should think of these things, Harkaway."

"I'm not a bit sorry I made Monday kick him," Jack replied, obstinately.

"It would not have been so bad if you had kicked him yourself."

"I know that, and that's why I made the nigger do it," anwered Jack.

"He has a revengeful face. I would rather have him as a friend than an enemy," said Mr. Mole.

"He can't hurt me."

"You don't know that. Never make an enemy. The mouse once helped the lion."

"That's a fable, sir," said Jack.

"It is, but we often see it exemplified in real life."

"Bother fables!" exclaimed Jack, yawning.

"That young man's father is one of the richest merchants in Singapore," continued Mr. Mole; "and he tells me that he is to be sent shortly to England."

"Indeed?" ejaculated Jack.

"Yes; he is to go to a university to complete his education. His health is not good, and it is thought that the climate of England will do him a vast deal of service."

"We've enough scamps in England without him," replied Jack.

"Never mind. Take my advice, and don't make an enemy of the young man. This is only a half-civilised place after all, and you don't know what he might be capable of."

"I only know one thing, sir," said Jack.

"What's that?"

"He won't stay here any more; I've put the kibosh on that."

"My dear Harkaway——"

"My dear Mr. Mole. Good-night. I'm not in the humour for a jaw, and I shall have a glass at the bar, and then turn into my virtuous bug-walk."

"I should rather call it mosquito-run," added Mr. Mole, with a smile. "But good-night, if you are off. Harvey and I will finish the wine over a game at crib. Eh, Harvey, what do you say?"

"I am agreeable, sir," replied Harvey.

Jack left them to themselves, and they did not retire till nearly midnight.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A SCENE AT THE ENGLISH CLUB.

THE English club was an unpretending building near the custom-house.

Its windows overlooked the water of the harbour, which flowed up to its walls.

All the Englishmen and the Americans in Singapore belonged to it; and when our travellers were put up for election, it was considered as a compliment which the residents wished to pay them.

Captain Hammond, of the "Rangoon," the steamer in which they were to sail for England, which was now taking in cargo, had put them up.

They were influentially seconded.

On the morning after the fracas in the street between Frank Davis and Monday, Jack and Harvey walked down to the club to ascertain the result of the ballot.

They were ushered into the reading-room of the club, which was also the smoking-room.

Through the open window of the club they could see the shipping in the harbour, and the bright sunbeams danced gaily over the water.

Captain Hammond approached Jack and said—

"I have much pleasure, Mr. Harkaway, in informing you that you and your friends were elected members of this club last evening. I was just coming to your hotel to bring you the news."

"Thank you very much for your kindness, which I shall not forget, and for which I thank you on behalf of myself and friends," replied Jack.

"Your friends were elected without opposition, and you had only one blackball."

"Indeed," said Jack. "I wonder who could have favoured me with that? My stay here has been so short that I was not aware I had had time to make any enemies."

Suddenly he thought of Frank Davis.

"Is Mr. Davis a member of your club?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. I remember that he came in last night just in time for the election," answered Captain Hammond.

"In that case, I know where to look for my enemy, though I care very little for the malice of a blackguard."

A slight cough arrested his attention.

Looking up, he saw Davis sitting on the ledge of one of the open windows, smoking a cigarette.

Had he known he was there, he would not have spoken so openly.

The attention of the few members in the club-room was called by this speech to Davis.

Looking very red in the face, the latter exclaimed—

"I think I heard my name mentioned?"

"Yes," replied Jack, promptly. "By me."

"I wish you would say anything relating to me in my presence, and not attack me behind my back," answered Davis.

"I am perfectly willing to repeat what I said. My remark merely had reference to your attempt to keep me out of the club last night."

"If I chose to blackball you, I only exercised my right. I have no wish to associate myself with objectionable people. But was that all you said?"

"I called you a blackguard, if you particularly wish to know," exclaimed Jack, boldly.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said Captain Hammond, "permit me to remind you that this is deplorably bad taste."

"Can't help it, my dear sir," replied Jack. "It is his doing."

Frank Davis grew very pale, and bit his lip.

"I have no wish to create a scene," he said; "but when I am grossly insulted by a man who has lived among savages, and makes a friend of a nigger, I really must protect myself."

"Certainly, certainly," observed some of Davis's friends.

Owing to his father's wealth and reputation, Davis was a great man with a certain set.

"Come outside, and have a dust-up with fists," said Jack. "Give and take alike, and if you lick me, I'll shake hands."

"It is impossible, sir," answered Davis, "that I could so demean myself. If I fight, I use the weapons of a gentleman."

"What may they be?"

"Swords or pistols, either of which I place at your disposal," replied Davis.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," again said Captain Hammond, "I really must beg that you will remember where you are."

"I decline your challenge. It is not the custom of Englishmen to fight duels. But I repeat, that if you want to see who is best man, I am ready for you with a bunch of fives," exclaimed Jack.

"Just what I might have expected from a man of your stamp," answered Davis, with one of his most offensive sneers.

"What do you mean?" asked Jack.

"Simply that, relying on your natural cowardice, you think you can insult a gentleman with impunity."

"Why, you ugly little whipper-snapper, you counter-jumping land-lubber, I've a good mind to punch your head," said Jack, indignantly.

"Of course. Cowards are always bullies. But vulgar abuse only lowers you still more in my eyes; and let me tell you, my blustering friend, that I shall be under the painful necessity of horsewhipping you in public if you do not mind what you are saying."

Jack could bear this no longer.

He rushed across the room, regardless of clubs, rules and etiquette.

Davis was still sitting in the open window, with his back to the water of the harbour.

Without giving him any notice, he struck him full in the face with his fist.

The blow caused the little dandy to lose his balance, and with a ludicrous cry of rage and fear, he toppled over, and fell with a splash into the water.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Harvey, as he disappeared, "where has he gone to?"

"Kingdom come, I hope," replied Jack, smiling grimly.

The members of the club rushed to the window in great excitement.

Davis was seen to rise to the surface, and shake his fist at Jack.

Then he swam away to a boat, climbed up the side, and was rowed, dripping wet, to the shore.

Jack laughed heartily; but Captain Hammond looked grave.

"This will have to be brought before the committee," he said.

"What will the result of that be?" asked Jack.

"I fear your election will be cancelled."

"That won't break my heart," answered Jack.

"I will try to avoid it, because that little wasp Davis will go about saying you were kicked out of the club for ungentlemanly conduct."

"Was it ungentlemanly?" inquired Jack, thinking the matter over for the first time.

Captain Hammond laughed.

"Ask yourself," he said. "That sort of thing would do very well on board ship, but in a club, my dear fellow, we allow no wrangling."

"Well, good-morning. I am much obliged to you all the same," replied Jack.

He made a stiff bow to the gentlemen in the room, who regarded him coldly.

Some acknowledged his salutation, and others simply stared rudely at him.

As he passed out he heard such remarks as—

"Bull in a china shop." "Uncultivated boor." "Turn the club into a bear-garden," etc.

"Come along, Dick," he exclaimed to Harvey. "It appears we're not good enough for this lot."

"They're no great loss," answered Harvey.

With a defiant air they left the club, and were just in time to see Frank Davis, covered with mud, wet through, and bareheaded, get into a carriage to be driven home.

His face wore the expression of a demon.

"I say, Jack," said Harvey, "mind that fellow doesn't knife you."

"Not he," replied Jack. "The beggar hasn't pluck enough to come within a mile of me."

The boys strolled about for some hours, visited several of the ships in harbour, and at length returned to the hotel to dinner.

"A note for you from the English club, Harkaway," exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"Read it, sir, if you please," replied Jack.

Mr. Mole did so.

"Dear me," he said. "It is a notice from the committee stating that, owing to your conduct this morning, the committee feel bound to censure you strongly; but on a vote being taken, it was decided to retain your name on the books by a majority of one."

"I'm glad of that," answered Jack; "because if I had been expelled, it would have been a triumph for that fellow Davis."

"What have you been doing?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Only punching, sir. Knocking this cove Davis into the sea for cheeking me."

"Ah! that is bad. What a pity you cannot keep your fighting propensities in check, but you always had too much of the bull-dog in you."

"Can't help it, sir," answered Jack. "It's the nature of the animal."

"You seem to have a great spite against Mr. Davis."

"It's his fault. Oh! here's Emily. First time I've seen her to-day," exclaimed Jack. "Emmy dear, I'm sorry to say I've been slipping into your friend."

"What friend?" asked Emily.

"Mr. Frank Davis."

"He's no friend of mine. I merely regarded him as an acquaintance of yours," she answered.

"Don't tell fibs, Emmy. You know you like him."

Emily began to cry.

"If you are going to treat me so cruelly," she sobbed, "I shall go upstairs again. I'm sure I did not put myself out of the way to be civil to him. You would not, I thought, like me to be rude to your guests."

Jack's heart melted in a moment.

Springing to her side, he kissed her tears away, and said—

"Don't cry, darling. Say you forgive me, and I'll never be naughty again."

"It's a great shame of you," she replied.

"So 'tis. I'm a beast, but that stuck-up, sneering cad riled me. I couldn't stand it any longer, so I mauled him about a bit."

"I shouldn't care if—if you kil—killed him," Emily answered continuing to sob, "if—if you were not so unkind to me."

It was some time before Jack could make his peace with her, but at last he succeeded and they were better friends than ever.

Emily wiped away her tears. Dinner was brought up; they all sat down, and as if by common consent, Mr. Davis's name was never once mentioned, and no allusion was made to the disturbance at the club.

After dinner the gentlemen lighted their cigarettes, and Emily took up a book to read.

Suddenly Monday burst into the room out of breath.

"What's up now, Monday?" cried Jack. "You'll bust up if you waste your wind like that."

"Take your hat off," said Harvey, removing his broad-brimmed Panama straw. "Why don't you learn decent manners?"

"I should think there was going to be a donkey-race to-morrow," remarked Dick.

"Where?" asked Harvey.

"All round Monday's hat. Sold again. I had you then, Dick," replied Jack, laughing.

Monday now found his tongue.

"Oh! Mast' Jack," he exclaimed, "such um big fire down street."

"A fire!" cried the boys, jumping to their feet.

"Yes, a big one. All the houses crackle and burn ever much so. Come on, sare, and see um fun."

"By Jove! I'm in that," exclaimed Jack, putting on his hat.

His example was followed by Harvey.

"And I, too," said Mr. Mole. "I will accompany you to the scene of the conflagration. Perhaps with my usual bravery I may be instrumental in saving some poor creature's life."

Before he had finished speaking, the boys were out of the room.

They followed Monday down the street, and were soon in the midst of a great crowd.

Smoke rose in dense masses, and sparks fell around in all directions.

Some wooden buildings used as warehouses were in flames.

How they had caught fire no one knew.

The firemen had already brought up their hand-engines, and were busily engaged in laying the hose, and getting to work.

"Man the pumps," shouted Jack, pushing his way to the front.

He laid hold of the handle of the nearest engine, which was speedily manned.

Harvey seized the hose, and directed it against the burning building.

A plentiful supply of water was secured from the harbour, which was not far off.

The crowd took Jack and Harvey for British officers, owing to their uniforms, and having a great respect for the English, they let them do just as they liked.

A small tree grew near one of the houses, but sufficiently distant to be safe from the effects of the fire.

Mr. Mole espied this, and with difficulty climbed up, sitting astride one of the branches.

"This is capital," he said to himself, as he rubbed his hands. "I shall have a good view here, and be out of the crowd. Harkaway will not know where I am, and I can say I bore an active part in extinguishing this dreadful fire."

The houses, being made of wood, burnt fiercely, and in spite of the torrents of water poured upon them, they were speedily destroyed.

Fortunately, they were nearly empty at the time of the fire; had they been full of goods, the result would have been much more disastrous.

Jack worked at the pumps like a nigger, and at length left off from sheer fatigue.

The fire was nearly out now, and had been prevented from extending any further on either side.

Looking around him, Jack perceived Harvey guiding the hose as if he had been born a fireman.

"I say, Dick," he said, stretching his limbs, "you got a better berth than I did."

"Talent, sir, talent," replied Harvey.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Jack; "there's some one who has got a better berth than either of us."

"Who?"

"Old Mole."

"Where is he?" asked Harvey.

"Up that tree. Pump on him," said Jack.

Harvey looked round and saw Mr. Mole serenely perched up in the tree, and half hidden by the leaves.

In an instant he diverted the hose from the burning building.

It did not much matter now as half-a-dozen engines were at work on it, and the fire was nearly over.

"Mind your eye, sir; the tree's on fire," shouted Harvey.

The next moment a shower of water fell like a deluge on Mr. Mole.

In his eyes, his mouth, knocking of his hat, in his stomach, filling his trousers and boots, came the unceasing stream.

"Wo!" he cried. "I say, Harvey, I am up in this tree"—splutter, splutter—"you'll choke me. I shall be drowned. Ho, ho! I say, stop that performance."

But Harvey continued to water him as if he was syringing a plant in a green house.

"Go it, Dick. Give it him hot," said Jack.

"This is unseemly. Bother those boys!"—splutter, splutter—stammered Mr. Mole. "They'll be the death of me before they've done; I know they will. Ugh! I'm half full of water already, and nearly drowned."

The cascade played gracefully upon him.

Much amused, the crowd looked up and began to laugh.

Mr. Mole could bear it no longer, and toppled off the branch, falling on the heads of the crowd below.

This fortunately broke his fall, and he was only a little shaken.

Rushing up to Harvey, he shook his fist in his face.

"You scamp!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean by this?"

Harvey said—

"Sorry to knock you off your perch, sir. Mind your eye, again."

He lifted the hose, and sent another jet right into his face.

In vain Mr. Mole capered and danced and tried to hit him.

The water drove him back, and he turned tail, running away to his hotel.

"Well done, Dick. Wire in, old man," cried Jack.

Suddenly Monday touched Jack on the shoulder.

"Mast' Jack," he said in a thrilling whisper, "you take care!"

"What of?" asked Jack.

"Mist' Davis close by. He speak to one man, and him a big scoundrel."

"What did he say?" inquired Jack.

Instead of answering, Monday turned rapidly round.

At the same moment a knife glided up Jack's arm, and he felt the hot blood slowly trickle down his sleeve.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE HIDDEN HAND.

"I'm wounded!" cried Jack, clutching his arm as a trickling sensation ran through it.

Turning round, he saw Monday struggling with an ugly-looking native, who, with a jerk of his leg, threw Monday off, and ran away, being speedily lost in the crowd.

Having heard Jack say he was stabbed Harvey came up at once.

"I hope you are not hurt?" he exclaimed, anxiously.

"Not much, I think," answered Jack, "though I believe the fellow tried to get at my heart with his bread-and-cheese cutter. Where's Monday?"

"Here him be, sare," said the faithful fellow.

"What does all this mean?" quickly inquired Jack.

"Monday him hear Mist' Davis point you out, sare, to that black thief, and just when I speak to you, him whip out um knife to stick with."

"Ah, I see; you turned the blow?"

"Monday seize him arm, sare, and turn him off. Don't know how he got away. Some twist him give with um leg."

"Perhaps you've saved my life," said Jack. "I didn't think Mr. Davis was one of that sort."

"But I did," answered Harvey. "Lean on me, and let us find a doctor. You must have your arm seen to."

With some difficulty they found a doctor, who happened to be an Englishman.

He examined the wound, and said—

"Where did you get this, young gentleman?"

Jack told him it was done in a scrimmage at the fire.

"Ah!" replied the doctor, "such things are not uncommon hereabouts; and if, sailor fashion, you will go in for free fights, you must take the consequences. My advice is, keep out of them."

"I will in future," answered Jack. "Is it anything serious?"

"No, it is not. I find it is merely a flesh wound; just

a rip of the skin. You have had what we should have called a shave, when I was a medical student at Guy's."

"I'm the luckiest dog out," exclaimed Jack, joyfully. "Always drop on my legs, don't I, Dick?"

"I must say you certainly do," answered Harvey.

When the wound was washed and strapped up, they went back to the hotel. Jack experienced nothing more than a slight weakness, with some smarting stiffness in the arm.

Mr. Mole was sitting before a big fire, huddled up in a thick dressing-gown.

A tumbler of steaming grog stood before him, and he had his feet in a pan of hot water.

"What on earth are you doing, sir?" said Jack.

"Enjoying the comforts of civilization, of which I have been deprived for some time," replied Mr. Mole.

"But a fire in the tropics, when it is hot enough to melt an iceberg in three minutes——"

"Is necessary for the preservation of my health. I have been shamefully treated, and already feel bronchitis fastening upon my chest."

"The ducking will cool you, sir," Jack said, laughing.

"It has done so. Can you find me a tallow candle, to tallow my nose with?"

"I don't suppose you'd get such a thing here, sir. Candles all melt. Try some soft soap."

"Harkaway, no joking; this is serious. Where's Harvey, the wretch? If I were not so ill, I would chastise him for his cruel joke."

"I am here, sir," answered Harvey. "Glad to see you're not dead yet."

"No thanks to you," said Mr. Mole, severely; "you see the wretched state you've reduced me to. Dreadful cold coming on—come on, in fact—and no candle to tallow my nose with. Awful!"

The boys could not help laughing.

Mr. Mole perceived that Harkaway carried his arm in a sling.

"What's the matter?" he inquired. "Nothing much, I hope."

"Oh, nothing half so bad as your cold, sir," answered Jack, carelessly; "only a stab in the arm."

"A stab? Dear me! Who did it?"

"Davis hired a fellow to knife me out of the way. It appears to be the custom out here. Nice sort of a place to live in, isn't it, sir?"

"Dear me, how quietly you take it. Bless my soul, is there not some sort of justice here?"

"Perhaps, yes; perhaps, no. But where's Emily?"

"I don't know. She was not here when I came in, and I have been so much taken up with my cold that——"

"Bother your cold. Ring the bell, Dick," cried Jack.

"Impulsive youths," remarked Mr. Mole, "are like obstinate mules; they will have their own way."

Harvey rang the bell, and Jack questioned the servants about Emily.

One said he saw her go to the door to look at the fire, and while standing there a man came up and requested her to come to Mr. Harkaway, who wanted her.

Jack turned deadly pale.

"I never sent for her," he said.

"She went a little way down the street, sir, and then I saw her get into a carriage, which drove off at a rapid pace," continued the domestic.

Jack sank into a seat faint and ill.

"It's a trap," exclaimed Harvey.

"Brandy," cried Jack; "give me some brandy."

"His request was complied with, and he freshened up a little.

"Who has done this base thing?" asked Mr. Mole. "Who can have carried off our little Emily, the life and soul of our party?"

"There is only one man in Singapore," replied Harvey, "who could have done it."

"And he is——"

"Frank Davis."

Jack was too agitated to speak.

"It is all part of a planned thing," continued Harvey. "Davis is in love with Emily—Jack insults him; he arranges to have Jack assassinated, and at the same time carry off Emily."

"I fear you are not far wrong," said Mr. Mole.

Jack got up and paced the room impatiently.

"Call Monday," he said.

Harvey went into the hall, and sent for the faithful Limbian.

When he entered the room he saw at a glance that something had happened.

"You taken worse, Mast' Jack?" he said.

"Look here, Monday, you must do me a service," said Jack.

"Monday lay down um life, sare. Can't say any more."

"I know that, and perhaps you will have to risk your life. Miss Emily has been carried off, we expect, by Davis."

"Missey Emily gone, sare?"

"Yes; not an hour ago."

"Where she go to, sare?" asked Monday.

"That we can only guess. I have heard that Mr. Davis's father has a house a few miles inland, which he very seldom uses. Find out where that is; go there at once, and bring us what news you can."

"Monday him go now, sare. He find the Missey Emily."

"Take off those togs, and go about as if you were a native of this place. You will attract less attention," said Harvey.

"A good suggestion," remarked Mr. Mole. "I forgive you now for pumping upon me, Harvey, I do indeed, and pardon you freely, for your cleverness."

"I thank you, sir; I'll make a note of it," answered Harvey.

"Off you go, Monday," continued Jack, "and mind you don't come back without news of some sort."

Monday nodded, and started on his errand.

Turning to Harvey, Jack said—

"You and I will work the city. If I could only catch that cowardly hound Davis, I'd wring the secret out of him somehow."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Mole, "it is not Mr. Davis after all."

"Who else can it be?" replied Jack.

Puzzled at this question, Mr. Mole was unable to give any answer.

"If I were not so ill I would accompany you," he remarked. "You must take the wish for the deed."

Harvey was as much concerned as his friend, and he gladly accompanied him on his voyage of discovery.

"Let's go to the club first," said Dick. "We may see or hear something of Davis there."

A short walk brought them to the club, where they found several people they did not know talking about the fire.

In a small community like that of Singapore a fire is an event of importance.

Talking to some friends, Jack saw Frank Davis, who did not seem any the worse for his immersion.

With some difficulty he restrained himself from rushing up to him.

The folly of such a proceeding occurred to him, and he fortunately drove back the wild beast feeling that will take possession of all of us at times.

"Watch him," whispered Harvey. "We can always follow him when he attempts to go."

To Jack's intense surprise, Davis no sooner saw him than he walked up, and extending his hand before everybody, exclaimed—

"Will you shake hands with me, Mr. Harkaway?"

"With you?" replied Jack.

"Yes; I was a little hasty this morning, and provoked you. I am willing to forgive that disagreeable shove you gave me into the water, for I can't bear malice."

The members of the club were much interested in this scene.

"Capital fellow!" "Good heart!" "Always said so," and so on arose from various quarters.

"I would rather not make friends with you," said Jack.

"Come, come, don't cherish a nasty feeling. You a sailor, Harkaway, and treasure up a grudge!" exclaimed Captain Hammond in his cheery voice.

"I have my reasons," said Jack.

"I am sure they can't be very good ones."

"I'm the best judge of that," Jack exclaimed, dryly.

"Well, you must please yourself, Mr. Harkaway," continued Frank Davis, with an apparently open smile. "I have made the advance, which there was no occasion I should do, I'm sure; but we have been friends and travelled together, so that I can afford to put a little ill-feeling in my pocket. Have you hurt your arm—dear me! I did not notice that you wore it in a sling."

Jack was confounded at his cool impudence.

"I was stabbed in the crowd at the fire," he said, looking Davis straight in the face.

The latter did not quail or flinch in the least. He bore the scrutiny without so much as lowering his eyes.

"He's got the nerve of old Nick himself," thought Jack.

"Stabbed!" repeated Davis, incredulously. "Now you are drawing upon your imagination."

"I am telling the plain truth without any varnish," answered Jack.

Many gentlemen crowded round him, and pressed him with a dozen questions, to all of which Jack replied—

"Ask Mr. Davis. He pretends to be ignorant of an attack which was directed at my life, when he knows more about it than I do."

Eyes were turned inquiringly at Davis.

"Really, gentlemen," he exclaimed, "Mr. Harkaway is an enigma to me, and I am at loss to a understand his meaning."

"He insinuates that you tried to assassinate him," exclaimed one gentleman.

"No, I don't insinuate anything," answered Jack. "I say openly that he hired a man to kill me, and I can prove it."

"How?"

"By the testimony of my black servant who saw him in the crowd, and heard him point me out to the ruffian in his pay."

Frank Davis turned away with a laugh.

"Is he drunk?" he exclaimed.

"I'm as sober as you are, perhaps more so," replied Jack, furiously; "and in spite of your sneers, I'll unmask you yet."

"Gentlemen," said Frank Davis, appealing to the members of the club, "I have tried to soothe the savage breast. What can I do more?"

"No, no; let him alone. Give him up," said his friends. "He must be mad."

What Jack would have said or done it is difficult to say, had not Captain Hammond seized him by the arm and drawn him towards the door.

"Let go my arm," said Jack, struggling.

"No, I will not. There will be a riot presently if you stop."

"What if there is?"

"Every man in the club except myself is against you. Come along," persisted Captain Hammond.

"I will not go to let that fellow have the best of me," said Jack.

"You shall. Come, come, I am a man, and you are only a boy after all. I will have my own way in this instance," Captain Hammond said good-naturedly.

"That is right. Get him away. Our time will come," remarked Harvey.

He was not blinded with passion and a sense of wrong as Jack was, and he saw that it would be of no use to have a row in the club just then.

By the exercise of main force, Captain Hammond drew Jack out of the room.

Presently they stood in the street, Jack panting and glaring fiercely at his friend.

"Well," laughed the captain, "are you going to eat me?"

Jack said nothing.

"Come, that's better. I thought you were going to make a meal off me. Take a stroll and let us talk the matter over."

As Jack hesitated, Harvey said—

"Do, there's a good fellow. Captain Hammond's advice is sensible I feel sure."

Jack put his uninjured arm in that of the captain's.

Harvey took the other side, and they walked up the quay.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MONDAY AND THE BLOODHOUND.

It was not difficult for Monday to discover the locality in which Mr. Davis's country house was situated.

But when he heard that he possessed two, it was not easy to decide which to go to.

The idea which had struck Jack was that Frank Davis had carried off Emily to a country residence, where by threats and confinement he would try to induce her to marry him.

If he had succeeded in his attempt to assassinate Jack, his task would have been easier.

Mr. Mole would not have occupied himself much about Emily, and it was doubtful whether Harvey would have done more than communicate with the authorities about the affair.

When Monday, who thoroughly endorsed his master's idea, heard that one of Mr. Davis's houses was situated in a lonely place and seldom or ever inhabited, he concluded that it was very likely Frank had caused her to be conveyed there.

It was late in the day when he had gathered all the information he wanted, but he did not hesitate to start at once and on foot, for the house.

The moon was shining brightly when he reached it, and saw a small, one-storied, pavilion-like house, surrounded with those verandahs so common in the east.

Gardens filled with lovely flowers and shrubs environed it, except at the back, where were built the stable and domestic offices.

Penetrating through the gardens, Monday cautiously advanced to the house.

A window in the Venetian style opened on to the lawn, and a light burning on a table enabled him to look inside.

Lying on a sofa, bathed in tears, with her hair hanging loosely over her shoulders he saw Emily, who was evidently plunged into the depths of despair, and overwhelmed with grief.

He was about to rush forward, when he found the window was carefully guarded with thick iron bars, which, while permitting the cool evening air to enter, effectually prevented anyone going in or out.

Advancing cautiously to the bars, Monday said in a low voice—

"Missey Emily, Missey Emily."

The girl started, and rising, looked eagerly towards him.

"Is it you, Monday?" she cried. "Oh, I am so glad. Where am I?"

"You not know?" asked Monday, in surprise.

"No. I have not the remotest idea. All I am aware of is that I was induced to go down the street to meet Jack, thrust into a carriage, driven off at a gallop, taken

here and put into this room, where I have only seen an old negress."

"This is Mist' Davis's house," said Monday.

"Then it is he who has carried me off. Does Jack know this?"

"Him suspect it, Missey Emily, and he send me to find out."

"Where is he now?" she inquired.

"In Singapore; but he soon come take you out," answered Monday.

"Oh, pray lose no time, but go at once. I am so frightened."

"Monday go now, Missey Emily. Before to-morrow morning she get 'way."

Emily thanked him heartily.

"Keep up your pluck, missey; all be right soon," said Monday.

He retired as cautiously as he came, and reaching the extremity of the garden jumped over the wooden fence, alighting in the road.

He was much pleased with his success, and prepared for a sharp run home.

All at once the sound of horse's hoofs fell upon his ears, and by the moonlight he saw a man on horseback, followed by a big dog of the bloodhound species, approaching him.

His sharp eyes enabled him to recognise Frank Davis.

But the recognition was not mutual.

Stripped to the skin like an ordinary native, Monday appeared to Frank to be some prowling robber.

"Hilloo, you black thief, what are you doing here at this time of night?" he exclaimed.

"Do? Nothing, sare," replied Monday. "Him as much right on the road as you."

"Have you, my good fellow, we'll see about that," answered Davis. "Here, Juno! Here, lass."

The dog looked up in its master's face and wagged its tail.

"After him, girl; fetch him down," continued Davis.

Monday took to his heels, having no fancy to be mangled and torn by the bloodthirsty hound.

His only weapon of defence was a long knife, which he had stuck in his girdle

Although he could run fast, the hound could run faster, and sprang after him with huge bounds.

Hearing the panting brute just behind him, Monday turned, and drawing his knife, stood at bay.

Frank galloped up to see what he called fun.

A fight between his dog and a common nigger just suited his truculent and cruel disposition.

"Hi, at him! Stick to him! Hi, at him! Loo! Loo!" cried Davis.

Encouraged by her master's voice, Juno seized Monday by the arm, and drew him on his knees.

Then a terrible fight began.

Monday stabbed at the dog, and the dog tore his flesh in various places, always trying to get at his throat.

This Monday struggled to prevent, as he knew the beast would strangle him if she succeeded in doing so.

They rolled over and over in the dusty road.

Frank laughed immoderately at the sport, and kept on encouraging the dog.

At length Monday made a home thrust, which struck the heart of his enemy.

With a short yelp, the dog turned over on her back dead.

"Confound you," cried Davis angrily, "you've killed my best hound. If I had a pistol about me, I'd shoot you."

Monday rose with difficulty; he was streaming with blood, and was much exhausted.

Game to the last, however, he nerved himself for another encounter.

Rushing forward, he seized Davis by the right leg, and jerked him upwards.

Unprepared for such a novel assault, Davis was pitched off his horse, and felt half-stunned by the fall into the road.

The next moment Monday, with the agility of a deer, was in the saddle.

Turning the horse's head in the right direction, he kicked its sides with his heels and was off like the wind towards Singapore.

Frank Davis picked himself up with a rueful expression, and looked after his horse.

"That's what I call a clever nigger," he said with a laugh. "He's killed my best hound, and hooked it off

with one of the fastest horses in the governor's stable. Well, I shan't holloa. He deserves it, hang me if he doesn't."

He shook the dust off his clothes, and walked along to the house.

"Now," he muttered, "for an interview with my little Emily. I wonder how she will receive me. It's a pity my fellow did not kill that infernal Harkaway right out, but I haven't done with him yet."

We must leave this amiable young gentleman to visit the bird in the cage, while we accompany Monday on his wild career to the city.

It was nearly midnight when he dismounted at the door of the hotel.

Jack and Harvey had just come in, after a long walk with Captain Hammond, which had cooled Jack's hot head.

Mr. Mole had gone to bed.

Bursting into the room, covered with blood and dust, Monday appeared to resemble some dreadful spectre.

"Why, Monday, what's come to you?" said Jack.

"Me found Missey Emily, sare," said Monday.

"Have you? That's first rate. You're a trump, Monday; but you're hurt."

"Never mind um hurt, sare. Mist' Davis he set um dog on me."

"What! that bloodhound I have seen with him? What a beastly shame."

"Great big dog, big as a man, sare. Monday kill him with um knife, and come home on Mist' Davis' horse."

"Good again. You can do it," cried Harvey.

"But tell us all about it."

"No time lose, sir. Just tie up Monday's wounds," replied the black, "and order carriage and two horses; quick, tell um all on the road. Missey Emily and Mist' Davis all 'lone together."

"He's right," answered Jack. "Cut downstairs, Dick, and order the carriage, while I tie up his bites; he's bleeding like a pig."

Harvey went downstairs, and Jack getting a sponge and a basin of water, wiped away the blood and dust, and then, tearing a shirt into strips, bound up the principal injuries which the black had sustained.

"Now um all right. Lose no more blood. That what um 'fraid of, sare," said Monday.

At the same time he tottered with weakness, and was obliged to lean against the table for support.

"Here, drink this," said Jack, pouring him out half a tumbler of brandy.

He did so, and it revived his drooping energies.

When the carriage was ready Monday directed the driver what road to take, and as they went along he related his adventures to his young master, who highly commended him for his cleverness and his courage.

"That must have been a nasty tussle with the pup," remarked Harvey.

"It would have been all up with Monday if he had not carried a knife. I know what those cross-bred Cuban hounds are," said Dick.

"Him think once it all up, sare," replied Monday. "The big brute him get me down and his face come close to my face. Ugh! It close shave."

They stopped the carriage at a little distance from the house, and told the driver to pull up by the side of the road and wait.

"Don't take the bridles off, or get down from your box, even," said Jack; "we may want to bolt in a hurry. Let this case of pistols remain by your side, for I shall sit on the box, and we can't tell what will happen."

The man said he fully understood, and Monday led the way to the back of the house.

It would have been useless to go to the front, as it was impossible to get through the iron bars which guarded the windows.

A door stood open, through which they passed, walking on tiptoe.

The sound of voices guided them to a room at the end of a long corridor.

"Listen!" said Jack, holding up his hand as a signal for his companions to stop.

They did so.

It was Emily's voice.

"I tell you plainly, Mr. Davis," she said, "that I can never love you, and after this declaration, if you persist in annoying me, you are guilty of an outrage which no gentleman should be guilty of."

"Lovely Emily," replied the young man, "my love for you must be my excuse. I am passionately fond of you. With my wealth I can make you take a position that a princess might envy."

"All that I have heard before. I beg you to restore me to my friends."

"Your friends cannot help you. Believe me, you are entirely in my power."

"Not so much, perhaps, as you may think," Emily said.

"Do you defy me?" Davis asked. "If so, there is nothing before you but a long captivity. Who could find you in this lonely house?"

"Jack Harkaway would find me anywhere," she answered.

"Bravo, Emily!" muttered Jack.

"Do not rely upon him; he is a broken reed," said Davis.

"Am I?" muttered Jack, again. "I'll let you know, my tulip, in a minute or two."

"Mr. Davis," said Emily, "I have always believed you to be a gentleman. Why do you act in this extraordinary manner?"

"Because I love you, and mean to have a kiss," he replied.

"Sir," she exclaimed, "I am helpless and defenceless, yet I have the weapons nature gave me, and if you dare to touch me with your little finger even, I will bite and scratch!"

"Bravo, Emily!" whispered Jack, a second time.

"By Heaven!" replied Davis, "you are very lovely. I will have a kiss, if I die for it."

He helped himself to some wine—several decanters were standing on the table—and approached her with an amorous leer on his face.

"Help! help!" cried Emily, as his arm encircled her waist. "Help! Oh, Jack, why are you not here to protect me?"

There was a sound of feet in the passage.

A heavy body rushed towards Davis, a fist clenched so firmly that it resembled iron, was dashed into his face, and he fell on the floor stunned.

The next moment Jack held Emily in his arms, and was covering her lips with kisses.

"I thought you wouldn't come, Jack dear," she murmured.

"Just in time," replied Jack.

Harvey and Monday were busily engaged in tying Davis's hands and legs.

Having done this, Harvey exclaimed—

"What shall we do with him?"

"Have you tied him fast?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

"He can't wriggle out?"

"If he does, I'll forgive him," replied Harvey.

"Then chuck him under the sofa like a hundred of coals, and let him lie there for a bit. I've got a new idea for punishing him, but it will keep a little while. What have you got in those bottles?"

Harvey examined the bottles on the table, and replied—

"All sorts."

"Open some champagne; I'll have a lush of something to celebrate this victory," exclaimed Jack.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TAR AND FEATHERS.

HARVEY contemptuously rolled Frank Davis under the sofa, where he lay as still as a mouse, either being really stunned by Jack's sledge-hammer blow or pretending to be so.

Not a sound escaped him in reality.

"It was fortunate you came when you did," said Emily. "I can't tell you how thankful I am."

"You must thank Monday," replied Jack.

Monday was grinning with delight.

He presented a singular sight, covered with white bandages as he was.

"Is he hurt, or are his clothes torn?" asked Emily.

"It isn't clothes; it's bandages," replied Jack. "Tell the lady all about it. What are you grinning at, you old mummy?"

Monday complied with this request, and Emily thanked him very much for his bravery.

Suddenly Jack jumped up from the sofa with a yell.

"What's the row?" said Harvey.

"Something's bitten me in the calf of the leg, and made its teeth meet," replied Jack. "Have you any dogs here, Emily?"

"I have seen none," she answered.

He looked under the sofa and found that Davis had rolled over, and so been able to bite him.

"You brute," exclaimed Jack. "If you weren't bound hard and fast, upon my word I could kick you in the face. Why didn't you fasten him up better, Dick?"

"I thought I had," replied Harvey. "It was my impression he couldn't wriggle a little bit."

"Bring him out, and put him in the middle of the room," exclaimed Jack.

Harvey hauled him out, and Davis looked up in Harkaway's eyes with a malicious expression of gratified malignity.

"I shouldn't care if I had been bitten by a decent sort of a man," said Jack. "The cad may poison the flesh or something. Perhaps he's been eating mouldy victuals."

Harvey laughed.

"He's not so bad as that," he said.

"When are we to go home?" asked Emily.

"Presently, my dear," answered Jack. "I have a carriage waiting outside. But first of all I must settle accounts with this cur here."

"What are you going to do with him?"

"You'll see if you live long enough," said Jack; adding, "Monday."

"Yes, sare," replied the black.

"Go into the yard, and see if you can find a barrel of tar."

"Tar?" exclaimed Emily. "What's that for?"

"Don't ask questions," answered Jack. "Be a good girl, and you'll see what you will see."

"There generally is tar about a country place to do up the palings with," said Harvey.

"Of course," answered Jack. "When you have found it, bring it in here."

"Yes, sare," replied Monday.

"What am I to do?" asked Harvey.

"Go into the yard and kill a couple of geese or half-a-dozen fowls, and bring them here."

"Are you going to have a feed?"

"Never mind; do as I tell you. Off you go—both of you," said Jack.

Monday and Harvey started together, and were gone nearly half-an-hour.

Jack put his arm round Emily's waist, and looking at Davis, said—

"You wanted a kiss, just now, from the best girl that ever lived?"

Davis made no answer.

Jack got up and kicked him in the ribs.

"Answer when you are spoken to, or it will be the worse for you," he exclaimed.

"If I did what then?" asked Davis, with some of his old independent manner.

"Just this; see me kiss her. That's all, old boy. That's your share."

Jack drew Emily to him as he spoke, and she let her head fall on his breast while he bent down and kissed her as he liked.

When he had done he said—

"How do you like that? Nice, isn't it, Mr. Cowardly Davis?"

Davis groaned.

If he could have got at Jack he would have killed him then and there, regardless of consequences.

Harvey came in first with two fine geese, a turkey, and three hens, which he had surprised in the hen-house, and killed by wringing their necks.

"There they are," he said.

"Chuck them down," replied Jack.

"What am I to do?" inquired Emily, with a smile.

"Help Harvey to pluck them, and throw the feathers in a heap on the floor."

"Oh! what a mess it will make on this beautiful carpet," she exclaimed.

"Never mind that. I think I shall burn the house down before I go."

"Oh, Jack?"

"You needn't say 'Oh Jack!' as if I were going to

jump down your throat," said Jack laughing. "Get to work instantly, miss."

Presently Monday returned, lugging a small barrel of tar with him.

Jack went to Davis, and putting him on a chair, took a knife out of his pocket and stood over him.

"Don't kill me," whined Davis, who thought his last hour had come.

"No fear," answered Jack; "I know a trick worth two of killing you."

He began to cut away his clothes until he was naked to the waist.

"What are you going to do with me?" asked Davis, who was puzzled at all these preparations.

"You'll know all in good time," answered Jack; who added—"Monday, as I tar him you throw feathers on him."

Monday grinned all over his face.

Jack took up a turkey's wing, and dipping it in the tar, smeared Davis all over with the sticky stuff.

Monday threw handful after handful of feathers over him, and he began gradually to take the appearance of a feathered creature.

Jack left his face unsmeared, so that people might know him; but he feathered his hair, and covered him in a most artistic manner.

Frank Davis's rage knew no bounds.

He swore, raved, and threatened them all with the severest penalties of the law.

"Don't you talk about law, my hearty," returned Jack. "You have carried off a young lady, tried to have me stabbed, and endeavoured to worry with your dog a poor inoffensive fellow you saw on the road. Law, indeed! I'll give you enough law, if you want it."

When he was thoroughly tarred and feathered Jack said—

"Now we are ready to start. Come along, Emily; take my arm. Dick, see to the bird."

Harvey touched Davis on the leg, and exclaimed—

"Get up."

Davis refused to move.

"Won't budge," said Harvey.

"Won't he?" replied Jack. "Emily, give me a pin."

She handed him one, which Jack stuck into Frank Davis's thigh.

He sprang up in a moment with a cry of pain.

"Found your legs, have you, old fellow? Thought you would," laughed Jack.

Davis had his legs untied, and walked by Harvey's side, his arms being fastened behind his back.

They all went to the carriage, which was waiting for them in the road, and getting in were driven to the city.

Davis was made to sit by himself on the front seat, Harvey standing over him.

Monday got on the box, and Jack and Emily sat side by side.

When they reached Singapore it was early morning.

Under the tropics people get up early and sleep in the middle of the day when the sun is fiercest.

Consequently the city was astir.

When the principal street was reached Jack stopped the carriage near the market-place, and told Davis to get out.

"Get out here?" he exclaimed, with horror.

"Yes; out you go—immediately, if not sooner. Stir your stumps," answered Jack.

Reluctantly Davis descended the steps and stood in the street.

He presented a strange spectacle.

Half man, half bird.

When the people in the street saw him they set up a great shout.

"Go on," said Jack; "cut along, or I shall stick a pin into you again."

Davis knew the locality very well, and his father's offices were not far off, so that he decided to run as fast as he could through the streets.

He made a start, but could not go very quickly owing to his hands being tied behind his back.

Men, women, and children howled at him and threw any object that came handiest, and it was only when bruised and exhausted that he reached a haven of refuge.

"That will teach him a lesson," said Jack, laughing heartily.

"I should think so," replied Harvey. "He will be a week getting the tar and feathers off.

"Mind one thing, Emily," exclaimed Jack; "don't you be humbugged again."

"I will take very good care I am not," replied Emily; "and believe me, dear Jack, and you, too, Monday, that I shall never, never forget your kindness."

"What have I done," said Harvey, "that I should not be thought of?"

"Oh, you're nobody; you can go and play," replied Jack.

When they reached the hotel they inquired for Mr. Mole.

The servant said that he had called him, but he refused to get up.

"Look here," said Jack; "perhaps Mole's taken worse; he said he had a cold. I will go and see to him."

"All right," said Harvey; "I will see Monday looked after. His wounds are getting stiff."

Harvey and Monday went away together, and Jack saw Emily to her bedroom, gave her a kiss, and went to Mr. Mole.

"How do, sir?" said Jack. "We've got back the lost dove."

"Glad to hear it, Harkaway; it is more than you deserve," answerd Mr. Mole. who was wrapped up in bed, as if he had a severe attack of influenza, and lived in Kamschatka.

He wore a nightcap which culminated in a most ludicrous tassel.

"Get up, sir," said Jack, "and take a turn with me in the fresh morning air."

"No, Harkaway, I distinctly refuse," answered Mr. Mole. "I have been very badly treated, and I shall not move from this bed for a month."

"What, sir, sleep for a month?" cried Jack.

"I did not say sleep, but I shall not get out of this bed for a month, and during that time you cannot play me any tricks. I have been pumped upon, and the result is a severe cold, which only the most careful nursing will cure."

"You've got a tile off, sir," replied Jack.

"Cease, if you please, to make vulgar allusions to the state of my mind, and leave me," said Mr. Mole.

"As you like, sir," replied Jack. "Hope you will be in a better temper when I see you again."

Mr. Mole pulled his nightcap over his eyes, and settled himself down for a second sleep.

Jack was tired and turned in, marvelling at the peculiar state of mind in which he had found Mr. Mole.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MR. MOLE GOES TO BED FOR A MONTH.

THE boys did not breakfast till late.

Both were worn out with the fatigue and excitement of the previous night.

Monday's wounds, though not dangerous, were exceedingly painful, and the doctor who had been called in advised him not to move out of his bed for a day or two.

When Harvey and Jack met over their coffee, the former said—

"Where's Mole?"

"Gone to bed for a month," replied Jack.

"Go on!" said Harvey. "What's the use of chaffing me?"

"I'm not chaffing. He swore last night he would not move. He is sulky because we pumped upon him."

"Does he mean it?"

"I believe he does."

"Oh, I can't live without old Mole," replied Harvey.

"Why?"

"He's such fun. We must have him out."

"It's all very well to say, have him out," answered Jack. "But how are you going to do it?"

"Easy enough," replied Harvey. "Look at those fellows in the street."

Jack looked out of the window, and saw some jugglers, who were performing with snakes, which they twined round their necks and even allowed to bite them.

"Well," said Jack, "what have those men to do with Mole?"

"I'll show you," replied Harvey.

He went downstairs, and talked to one of the jugglers for a few minutes, and when he came back, he carried something with him in a small basket.

"What have you got there?" asked Jack, curiously.

"A fine young cobra," replied Harvey. "It isn't dangerous, so don't start; besides it can't get out, unless I open the basket."

"Isn't it poisonous?"

"It was once upon a time; but my juggling friend told me that they had drawn his poison fangs, and that if the thing did bite now, it wouldn't do any harm."

"I see," exclaimed Jack. "Still, I don't like snakes, whether they are harmless or not."

"I don't suppose Mole does either. Don't you think he would jump, if he found a thing of this sort in his bed?"

"By Jove!" cried Jack, laughing; "he'd have a fit."

"Sorry for him, but he will have to make acquaintance with this new sort of bedfellow."

"When and how is the nameless deed to be done?"

"Presently he will get up to have his bed made, and then I shall introduce the snake. It will be all a lark."

"You're improving," said Jack, patting him on his back.

"It's being so much with you," replied Harvey. "Evil communications corrupt good manners. Come up to Mole's room."

They ascended the stairs together, and found Mr. Mole sitting in his dressing-gown, with a cotton nightcap on his head, looking out of the window, through which a cool breeze entered.

The servant was just finishing making the bed.

Jack went up and spoke to Mr. Mole, and when the servant departed, Harvey opened the basket, and allowed the serpent to glide into the bed.

Then he, too, went up, and talked to Mr. Mole.

"Going to turn in again, sir," he said; "or have you thought better of it?"

"No," replied Mr. Mole, "I intend to keep my bed until we sail for England. You boys shall not play me any more tricks, I promise you, for I will keep out of your way."

"What shall we do without you, sir?" said Jack.

"You should have thought of that before. I am sure the deprivation of my society must be a great blow to you."

"You're sulking, sir. Don't sulk; it's childish," exclaimed Jack.

"I am the best judge of my own actions, and I tell you flatly, once for all, that I have gone to bed for a month, and no persuasion on your part shall get me out."

"Won't anything induce you to change your mind?"

"No power on earth will do it, Harkaway," answered Mr. Mole, firmly.

He threw off his dressing-gown and stood in his night-shirt, looking very comical with his old-fashioned night-cap on his head.

"In my bed I am at peace," he murmured.

Turning the clothes down a little way, he crept in, and a smile of placid satisfaction stole over his features.

All at once the placid expression vanished.

He fidgeted in bed, and seemed ill at ease.

"What's the matter, sir?" asked Jack.

"The slut who made this bed has left something in it. I can feel something about my legs. What the deuce is it?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, uneasily.

"Better have a look, sir. Perhaps it is a dead dog."

"Drat it!" continued Mole. "It's something alive. It keeps on moving."

He rose up and threw down the bedclothes.

The snake had been making itself a nest to go to sleep in, and was annoyed at being disturbed in the midst of its preparations.

It coiled its tail, and sat upright, darting its forked tongue in and out, and emitting a sharp hiss.

"The Lord be good to me!" cried Mole, in dire terror.

"Why, it's a snake," said Harvey. "How on earth could it get there?"

"It's a deadly cobra," continued Mole. "A venomous serpent. Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! I wish I was well home again. Strike it, Harvey. Take it by the neck and throw it out of window."

"Thank you, sir; I'd rather not, if it is the same to you," replied Harvey, coldly.

"Harkaway," pleaded Mr. Mole, "you are a brave boy."

"Hope so, sir."

"For goodness' sake, seize the snake! It will spring upon me. Already it is fixing me with its awful eyes.

Save me, Harkaway; all my worldly goods shall be yours. Save me—save me!"

"Nasty things snakes, sir; don't like to handle them," said Jack.

Mr. Mole's terror increased every moment.

The snake did not attempt to fly at him.

It had been more than two years with the jugglers, and was used to human beings, and expected to be taken up and put through its performance.

"Look," cried Mr. Mole, white with fear, "look at the venomous creature. It will dart at me, fix its fangs in my flesh, and in half an hour, I, Isaac Mole, will have ceased to exist. Oh, Lord! oh Lord!"

"Neither Harvey nor I dare touch it, sir," said Jack.

"What am I to do?" asked Mole.

"If I were you, sir, I'd bolt. Perhaps there are more in the room. There is generally a nest where you see one."

Finding that Mr. Mole did not attempt to handle it, the snake, which was inclined to be tame, thought it would commence the performance by itself.

It put itself in motion, gliding along Mr. Mole's leg, causing him to utter the most awful yells.

Then it wound round his arm, and reaching his neck, coiled itself in two folds, and bringing its head to a level with Mr. Mole's nose, looked in a half affectionate manner at him.

Jack and Harvey laughed immoderately.

They had never seen anything so funny.

"It wants to kiss you, sir. Stroke it," said Jack.

For a moment Mr. Mole had been paralysed with fear.

Recovering himself, he sprang out of bed, and in his night-gown and cap, descended the stairs six at a time, cleared the hall at a few bounds, dashed into the street and ran for his life.

He uttered incoherent cries, and the crowd in the street thinking he was mad, ran after him, hooting and yelling like demons.

The snake clung fast, evidently regarding this as a new performance.

Mr. Mole had only one idea, and that was to throw himself headlong into the water of the harbour, which was at the bottom of the street.

He thought that land snakes could not live in water.

But just as he reached the quay, a rough grasp seized his arm and forced him on his knees.

The jerk threw off the snake, which glided away, looking for its basket.

Unfortunately for it, some boys in the crowd saw it, and speedily dispatched it with stones.

The person who had stopped Mr. Mole's wild career was Captain Hammond.

"A madman," shouted the throng.

"Who are you," asked the captain, "and what are you doing?"

Mr. Mole put up his hand, and finding the snake was gone, breathed again.

At the same moment he looked up and recognised Captain Hammond.

"Do you not know me?" he said.

"No; hang me if I do," replied the captain.

"I am Mr. Mole."

"Harkaway's Mole?" asked the skipper.

"If you choose to put it so. I am anybody's Mole. Take me back to the hotel; the danger is over now."

"What danger?"

"Snakes."

"Snakes?" repeated the captain. "Humbug. They don't come into this city."

"Don't they! There was one in my bed. But take me back. I fear, from the tittering of the crowd, that I present a singular not to say a ludicrous appearance."

The captain gave him his arm, and in a very tottering state, Mr. Mole was conducted back to his hotel.

Nothing would induce him to go into his bedroom again; he was afraid of more snakes, and throwing himself into an armchair, he sighed deeply and shivered.

"If ever I am caught out of England again," he exclaimed, "I'll buy a stick and beat myself."

Harvey took Captain Hammond on one side and let him into the joke, at which he laughed.

Mr. Mole, however, did not suspect Harvey's share in the matter.

He thought the snake had crept into the house through the window.

In fact, his mind was so perturbed, that he could scarcely think at all.

"Heaven has been good to me," he said. "I will make a vow—in olden times, people, after a great mercy had been vouchsafed to them, used to go on a pilgrimage or a crusade. I can't go about like a pilgrim or a crusader. What shall I do, Harkaway?"

"Go to bed again, sir."

"No!" replied Mr. Mole, with a shudder. "No more bed for me in Singapore. I shall sleep on a sofa during the remainder of our stay here."

"About this vow, sir?"

"Ah! What shall I do to show my gratitude for my preservation from that poisonous reptile? I will never pass a blind man without giving him sixpence. There, Harkaway, what do you think of that?"

"Make it a bob, sir; a tanner's mean, and will look shabby."

"A shilling be it then. But what are you doing there?" said Mr. Mole.

"Opening a case of wine, sir."

"Wine?"

"Yes. It has just come. It is directed to 'Mr. Harkaway, with Captain Hammond's compliments.'"

"Ah! Something very choice, I daresay," said Mr. Mole, smacking his lips. "Just what I want to revive me after my trials. Pour me out a tumbler full. I will taste it, Harkaway."

"All right," said Jack. "You shall have the first swig."

He drew out a bottle from the case, and removing the cork, poured out a tumbler full, which he handed to Mr. Mole.

The latter drank it at a draught.

"What do you think of it?" asked Jack.

"Not bad—not bad, by any means; but it's funny tasting stuff, and has a burning in the mouth," replied Mr. Mole.

"Your mouth's out of taste, sir."

"What's that?" inquired Captain Hammond, who had just finished listening to Harvey's relation of the trick of which Mr. Mole was the victim.

"We have tapped your wine, captain," said Jack.

"My wine?" repeated Hammond in surprise.

"Yes! the wine you sent me just now, and for which

I have not had an opportunity to thank you before now."

"My dear fellow, there must be some mistake!" said Captain Hammond.

"How?" inquired Jack.

"I sent you no wine."

"Look at the direction on the case," said Jack. "Here it is, as plain as a pikestaff: 'Mr. Harkaway, with Captain Hammond's compliments.'"

The captain looked carefully at the label.

"Yes; you are right so far," he said. "But still I'll swear I sent you no wine, neither is that direction in my handwriting."

Jack had refilled Mr. Mole's tumbler, and was going to drink, when the captain said—

"Don't touch it, my lad. There is something wrong here."

Jack regarded him with astonishment, in which both Harvey and Mr. Mole shared.

What new danger or mystery threatened them?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MORE TREACHERY.

THE captain was positive that he had not sent the boys the wine, and Mr. Mole became alarmed at having drunk it.

"It seems to me," said the captain, "that this direction on the case is in Mr. Davis's writing."

"My enemy," remarked Jack.

"Yes, indeed. We have heard at the club all about your tarring and feathering him, and then turning him up in the market-place, more like a bird than a human being. He is the laughing-stock of the town."

"Why then should he become civil, and send me some wine?" asked Jack.

"Perhaps it is poisoned. Let us procure a dog, and try the experiment on him."

"No need to do that," said Jack; "Mr. Mole has drunk half a tumbler— Hullo! what's the matter with him?"

Mr. Mole had fallen into a chair, and was putting both hands to his stomach as if in pain.

"Got the mullygrubs, sir?" said Jack.

"I'm very bad. I was taken all at once," replied Mr. Mole, groaning. "Send for a doctor. Get a stomach-pump."

"Good idea, stomach-pump," said Jack. "Run, Dick, and fetch a saw-bones. I should like to see Mole pumped."

Mr. Mole sank from the chair to the floor and writhed in sinuous contortions, while Harvey went for the doctor.

"I'm poisoned," he said. "It's very hard to be poisoned. Oh, Lord! what a time they are getting that pump!"

The captain and Jack were much alarmed at the symptoms displayed by Mr. Mole.

There was no doubt that the wine had been poisoned, and that Frank Davis had hoped by these means to kill the whole party.

It was a great relief when at last the doctor arrived with the strange apparatus called the stomach-pump, which was immediately applied.

Instead of feeling any relief, and getting better, Mr. Mole's limbs contracted, and he appeared to be sinking into a state of stupor.

"He is not going to croak, is he?" said Jack.

"I cannot tell," said the doctor. "It is a serious case."

He put his hand on his breast.

There was no movement.

"I fear," he added, "that the unfortunate gentleman is gone."

"I'll have it out of that Davis," cried Jack.

"Poor old Mole," said Harvey.

"Well," continued Jack; "I wouldn't have lost Mole for anything. Is there nothing you can do, doctor?"

"He is beyond human aid. Allow me to give you the card of an undertaker. In this climate the body must be buried to-morrow morning."

"I'm flummoxed," said Jack. "This is getting severe. It's cut me up more than anything."

Seeing he could do no more, the doctor retired.

Jack had Mr. Mole put on his bed, and covered with a sheet.

The captain went to communicate with the police of the town, who said that the evidence against Mr. Davis was not strong enough to warrant his arrest.

In fact Davis's father was so great a man in the town, that they were afraid of attacking him.

Both Harkaway and Harvey were much shocked, and Emily joined in their grief.

They had narrowly escaped a sudden death themselves.

"It's an awful grief, just now," remarked Jack, "when our troubles are nearly over."

"He wasn't a bad sort," said Harvey, "and it makes me mad to think that the poor beggar, who had done nothing, should suffer through our rows."

"I've a good mind to have him embalmed, and take him back to England in a glass case," said Jack.

"Better bury him. You be chief mourner," replied Harvey.

"No. I should like to have him mummified. There are always embalmers in these countries; we must inquire for one," persisted Jack.

Emily laughed.

"I'm ashamed of you, Emmy," said Jack, putting on a severe look. "Come here and give me a kiss, by way of doing penance, at once."

"If you want one, you can come and take it," she answered coquettishly, adding—

"I know it is a very dreadful thing to laugh at a time like this, but the idea of poor dear Mr. Mole being made into a mummy, is so funny."

"So it is when you come to think of it," observed Harvey.

"I don't see it," replied Jack. "Mole, in a glass case, looking as large as life, with a suitable epitaph, would be highly edifying. Suppose we were to say—

"This is the mummified Mole,
Who was a jolly old soul."

"Give us another rhyme, Dick."

"Let the bell toll for poor old Mole."

replied Harvey

"That's better. Go on," exclaimed Jack, encouragingly.

"He wasn't worth a farden,
Till he got his tea-garden."

"That's bad. You began well, as you generally do, but you always fall off," Jack exclaimed.

"If you can't make a better epitaph than that, you ought to give up the attempt," said Emily; "and I think your trying to do so is much more disgraceful than my laughing."

"We don't mean anything, Emmy," replied Jack. "If I wasn't to talk and chaff a little, I should cry. You don't know how this has cut me."

"I can say ditto to that," remarked Harvey. "It's entirely crabbed any pleasure I feel in going back to England."

They became grave after this, and it was soon time to retire to rest.

Early the next morning they were astir, and the first visitor at the hotel was the undertaker, who was a Dutchman, unable to speak a word of English.

Jack looked at his card, and read "Mynheer Van Clootz," and seeing the word "undertaker" in English, divined the motive of his visit, and sadly led the way upstairs.

An assistant followed with a coffin, which was placed on the floor.

Mr. Mole was then perfectly rigid and motionless, and taking him up in his arms, Mynheer Van Clootz laid him down in the coffin.

As it happened he did not quite fit.

It was necessary to bend the legs a little, to make them come in, and this Mynheer Van Clootz proceeded to do with some force.

Jack had turned to the window, and was wiping away the tears as they chased one another down his face.

Suddenly he heard a noise, and Mynheer Van Clootz, uttering strange cries in his own sweet native tongue, ran past him.

Turning to the coffin, Jack saw Mr. Mole sitting up, and looking curiously around him.

"Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, "I have overslept myself, and the bed feels hard. What have you got for breakfast? My stomach is strangely empty."

Jack could understand this when he recollected how the doctor had worked the pump the night before.

His surprise at seeing Mr. Mole alive was immense, but his joy equalled his astonishment.

The Dutchman and his assistant were so frightened that they did not stop until they reached their place of business, for they thought they had seen a ghost.

"Where am I?" continued Mr. Mole, looking round him; "and what have I been doing?"

His mind was so confused that he could not recollect anything.

"You have been on a visit to another land, sir, and I'm very glad they let you come back again," said Jack.

"Let me see; I drank that wine—I was ill—the doctor came—I got worse, and I suppose you thought me dead."

"That we did, sir."

"I must have fallen into a trance. The stomach-pump saved my life, but the effect of the poison was to send me into a deep sleep. What is this? A coffin? Bless my soul! I have had a narrower escape than I thought."

"You would have been screwed down in another five minutes, sir," said Jack. "The cold-meat box was ready, and things won't keep in this climate."

A shudder ran through Mr. Mole as he extricated himself from the coffin and threw off the ghastly cerements of the grave.

"I say, sir," exclaimed Jack, "have a lark with Harvey."

"In what way, may I ask?"

"Go into our sitting-room, and frighten him into fits. If Emily is there, I will prepare her for your resurrection."

"Upon my word, Harkaway, I do not think I ought to lend myself to such an imposture," replied Mr. Mole, with a grim smile.

"Just for fun, sir."

"And moreover, I am physically incompetent. I am consumed with a raging thirst, and my unhappy stomach is as empty as a drum."

"It shall be filled, sir, without delay. Tog yourself up a bit, and in ten minutes come downstairs. I will order a cold collation—champagne and cold fowl, or something; and if we don't give Dick fits, I'm not all there."

"Very well. On that understanding, I fall in with your views, but I will first offer up a thanksgiving for my deliverance from the grave."

"Perhaps you are reserved for a different fate, sir. Water won't drown you, poison don't hurt you, savages won't eat you, snakes won't bite you, and two wives only make you grow fat and saucy."

"Do you mean to imply that I was born to be hanged, Harkaway!" asked Mr. Mole.

"No, sir, we won't say that; we will say that you were born to be elevated. Don't rile, sir. Don't shy your coffin at me. I'm not strong, and mother says I'm not to be hurt," exclaimed Jack, laughing, as he ran from the room.

"What a boy that is," remarked Mr. Mole, as he poured some water into the basin and washed his face and hands. "But I do think he is pleased to see me alive. What an escape I have had, to be sure?"

Jack's first care was to order the banquet, as he called it, and to see the best spread that could be got ready at a moment's notice was sent upstairs.

The food and Jack entered the room together, and Harvey exclaimed—

"What, grubbing again? You have only just had your breakfast. What a fellow you are to gorge! Have you seen the decent thing done by poor old Mole?"

"Yes; he's screwed down as tight as wax."

"How did he look?"

"Fine. I never felt so queer in my life as when I took my last look at him," said Jack.

"I couldn't do it," exclaimed Harvey. "I tried to screw my courage up, but it was no good at all. You've more pluck than I have."

"Of course. You're not in the hunt with me."

Harvey wiped his eyes with his sleeve.

"Hullo!" replied Jack; "why those weeps? You're doing the briny old woman."

"And I'm not ashamed of it. If any one would bring old Mole to life, I'd——

Harvey hesitated.

"What would you do?" asked Jack.

"I'd stand on my head in a corner till dinner time, hang me if I wouldn't," replied Harvey, at a loss how to

express the gratitude he would feel in the event of such an improbable occurrence taking place.

Jack smiled quietly, and drawing Emily on one side, whispered to her—

"Don't be frightened. Mole isn't dead. It was only a trance. I want to startle Dick; do you twig?"

Emily looked astonished and made no reply, though she intimated by a significant look that she understood him.

Going back to the table Jack drank some iced water and exclaimed—

"Perhaps Mole's ghost will favour you with a visit some of these fine nights, Master Dick."

"And if it did do you think I should care? I've seen too many things in my time to be frightened easily," replied Dick.

"Wouldn't anything frighten you?"

"No. I don't believe any mortal thing would, after the course of Pisang I have been put through," replied Harvey, boldly.

At this moment Mole entered the room.

He looked gravely, almost threateningly at Harvey, who trembled violently, and showed symptoms of being startled, if not really frightened.

"It—it's Mole!" he stammered.

Mr. Mole raised his arm, and Harvey shrank back into a corner.

"Jack," he cried, "what is it?"

"What's what?" replied Jack, rather ungrammatically.

"Why this—this thing."

"I can't see anything," answered Jack.

"Not see anything? Then it's a ghost. It's Mole's spirit! What shall I do?"

"Get under the table," suggested Jack.

Thoroughly terrified, Harvey crept under the table and laid still, until a hearty laugh fell upon his ears.

He got out of his undignified position and beheld Mr. Mole eating a salmon steak, done to a turn, as fast as he could.

"Ghosts don't eat," he exclaimed.

"Any fool knows that," replied Jack.

"Then it's no ghost."

"Touch him and see. He's tucking in a good un," con-

tinued Jack. "Thought you said nothing could frighten you, eh, Dick?"

Harvey looked crestfallen; but he was not yet satisfied, and walking up to Mr. Mole, said—

"Is it really you, sir?"

"Yes, Harvey, I am the sleeper awakened. Pour some of that iced hock into the silver goblet," replied Mr. Mole; "you may be my cup-bearer."

Harvey did so, and remarked—

"I am delighted to see you again, sir; but I must admit I was considerably knocked off my perch at first, although I wasn't really frightened."

"Now, Dick, that won't do. It's a clumsy get off," exclaimed Jack, laughing.

"No more I was."

"You know you were in a dismal fright."

"I wasn't. It was only a slight shock, that's all. I knew it was Mole all along."

Emily approached Jack, and said in a low tone—

"I fancy I can see some one listening at the half-open door."

"Nonsense!" replied Jack.

"I'm almost certain," she persisted.

"Hold hard," replied Jack; "I'll soon unearth the fox. Wonder who it is?"

He approached the door on tiptoe.

"Oh, be careful, Jack!" said Emily.

He nodded, and prepared himself for a struggle.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FRANK DAVIS HAS HIS EAR NAILED TO THE DOOR.

The next minute Jack bounded over the threshold.

A man who was in reality listening at the door, tried to escape.

Jack seized him in his powerful grasp.

There was a short, sharp struggle.

Presently he reappeared, dragging the listener in triumph into the room.

A glance sufficed to show that he had captured his

enemy, Frank Davis, though how he came in his peculiar position, or what his motive was, he had yet to find out.

"So, Mr. Davis, you add listening at doors to your other accomplishments," said Jack, holding him down.

Davis looked sheepishly around.

"I came to pay you a visit," he said, "to explain, or rather, to demand an explanation."

"Why did you not send your name up like a gentleman?"

"I did not consider it necessary."

"You were anxious, I suppose, to know if we were all dead, but you see we are alive and kicking," said Jack.

"I have heard something about some poisoned wine being sent to you. Though why you should accuse me of the crime, I don't know."

"We have our reasons."

"Ever since you have been in Singapore," cried Davis, "you have persecuted me. First of all, you knock me into the harbour; then you break into my house, and cover me with tar and feathers; now you assault me, in an infamous manner. What is the reason of it?"

"It's all very well to put on a face of injured innocence," replied Jack; "but, as I said, we have our reasons."

"What are they?"

"Did you not insult me?"

"Not that I am aware of," replied Davis. "Let me get up, please."

"Get up, if you like, but if you stir without my permission, when you are on your pins, it will not be well for you."

Davis rose, and shook himself.

"Now answer my question," continued Jack. "Did you not hire a man to stab me?"

"Certainly not."

"Did you, or did you not carry off Emily?"

"I was wrong there, I admit, but I offer a most handsome apology to the young lady," replied Davis, sheepishly.

"Did you not send me a present of poisoned wine, which might have killed the lot of us, and very nearly settled Mr. Mole's goose as it was?"

"No, I deny that."

"Were you not listening at the door to hear what our suspicions about you were?" pursued Jack.

"I repeat," replied Davis, "that I came to demand an explanation of your conduct, which I hold that I have a right to do."

"It will be best for you to clear our of Singapore as soon as you can, or I shall insist upon the authorities arresting you," replied Jack.

"That you can do as you like about," said Davis, with his accustomed insolence. "Do you still refuse me an explanation?"

"You cowardly humbug!" cried Jack, "you will see directly what I will do with you. Dick, go and get me a hammer and a long nail."

Harvey ran downstairs at once, and soon returned with what he had been sent for.

"Now," cried Jack, "hold this cur up against the door."

Harvey seized the unfortunate Davis, and pushed him up against the edge of the door.

Jack approached with the nail and hammer.

"In Heaven's name, what new outrage am I to be subjected to?" cried Davis.

He was watching the preparations with dismay.

"You needn't howl before you're hurt," replied Jack.

"Miss Emily," pleaded Davis, "you are a lady; intercede for me."

Emily remained silent.

"Mr. Mole," exclaimed Davis.

"Sir, to you," replied Mr. Mole, with his mouth full.

"Save me from this treatment, I am a gentleman."

"Pity you don't behave as such," answered Mr. Mole. "I can not help you. People who send other people poisoned wine, and subject them to the exhaustive action of the stomach-pump, deserve no mercy at my hands."

"Hold him tight, Dick," exclaimed Jack.

When Davis' right ear was close to the door Jack put the nail against it.

A sharp blow from the hammer forced the nail through the cartilage, another sent the iron into the door, a third made it fast; and Davis had his ear nailed to the woodwork.

A sharp cry of mingled pain and rage broke from him.

"You shall repent this!" he screamed.

"That is how we serve fellows that listen at doors," remarked Jack, surveying him complacently.

"It just serves him right," observed Harvey; adding, "what a fool he looks."

"So you would look a fool, under the circs.," replied Jack.

"Don't keep him long like that," replied Emily, whose tender heart felt for him.

"I shall," answered Jack. "We are all going out for a walk when Mr. Mole's done pitching in, and he will have to stop where he is till somebody finds him, unless he likes to bolt and leave his ear behind him."

"I am just getting my second wind," said Mr. Mole, attacking a larded capon.

"Don't hurry, sir; the performance is not yet over. Come here, Emily."

"What for, Jack?"

"To stick pins into him. Come along. Stick them in anywhere soft, and make him holloa again, like the cur he is."

"This behaviour is worthy only of savages," protested Davis.

"How about the poisoned wine and abduction?" asked Jack. "Is that civilised?"

"I am sure Miss Emily is too much of a lady to torture me," continued Davis.

"She will have to do what she is told. You come prick him, Emily, or there will be a row in the house."

Emily hesitated.

"Let him off, Jack dear; you have punished him enough," she said.

"This is mutiny in the camp; but I suppose I must, if you ask me, my pet," replied Jack. "Put on your sun-hat, and let us go out. I can't breathe while I am in the room with this fellow."

Davis presented at once a painful and a ridiculous figure, nailed by the ear, as he was, to the doorpost.

His face was distorted with rage.

"Look here, Mr. Harkaway," he exclaimed.

"What now?" asked Jack.

"You sail in a day or two for England, and you may think that you will escape me."

"I ain't afraid of you. Now I know what you are and what your game is, I shall be on my guard."

"Never mind; listen to what I have to say. I, too, am going to England to complete my education at a university."

"I daresay it requires it," sneered Jack.

"Mark my words, we shall meet again."

"I hope not."

"But I say we shall," replied Davis.

"Well, there is one comfort, England isn't Singapore; and if you try any of your poisoning dodges on there, you will find yourself in the wrong box."

"You hope to marry Emily," continued Davis.

"That's my business," replied Jack flushing.

"I tell you, she shall never be your wife. Never, never; as long as I live."

Jack stared at him in amazement.

"You're a nice sort of a fellow," he said. "What do you mean by threatening me?"

"I speak the truth, and you will find that making an enemy of me was the worst day's work you ever did," answered Davis, vindictively.

Suddenly a gust of wind blew the door to with great violence.

A horrible cry broke from Davis, who was forced outside.

Dismal yells were heard in the corridor.

"By Jove!" said Harvey, "he's left his ear behind him."

"Has he? I didn't mean that," exclaimed Jack.

He opened the door, and there, on the post, was the unfortunate man's ear, literally torn from his head.

They could see nothing of Davis.

The fact was that, mad with pain and rage, he had run away, holding his handkerchief to his head, to seek for medical assistance.

"Blow me tight," said Jack, "that's a funny thing. He's a settled member now. I am sorry for it though."

"You have two enemies, Hunston and Davis," said Harvey. "The first is one-armed, and the second one-eared."

"Can't help spotting them in a crowd, then."

"Not much."

"I didn't mean to wrench his ear off," observed Jack; "though he deserves it, for what he has done to us."

"What's that?" asked Mr. Mole, throwing himself back in his chair with a sigh of satisfaction.

"Mr. Davis has bolted, sir, and left his ear behind him."

"Left his ear! Ha, ha! You're joking."

"I'm not. There it is on the doorpost," replied Jack.

"Dear, dear! What a strange proceeding. Poor fellow! Well, I had no hand in it, that's one comfort, though I hope you won't get into trouble for pulling people's ears off."

"It was an accident. I nailed him up, but I didn't make the door blow to."

"It came as a punishment to him. He was cursing like a pagan," observed Harvey.

"Can't be helped," said Jack. "Have you fed, sir?"

"Well, Harkaway, very well," answered Mr. Mole; "the inner man is comforted, and Isaac's himself once more. I shall now be glad to join you in a drive—say a drive, for walk I can not, with all the luggage I have taken on board."

"We must not let Emily see this," replied Jack. "I'll undo the ear, and you can swab the claret with the tablecloth, Dick."

The blood was quickly wiped up, and Jack unfastened the ear, which he wrapped in a piece of paper with ghastly precision.

"What shall we do with the lug?" he asked.

A waiter solved the difficulty by coming in and saying—

"Mr. Davis has sent for his ear, sir."

In spite of the horror of the whole thing, Jack could not helping smiling.

"Here it is; in the paper," he replied. "Give it his messenger with my compliments."

The servant, who was an American, and who had seen a little shooting and bowie-knifing, did not seem in the least surprised.

One man had gouged another's eye out in a bar and then thrown it at him, so that acts of violence were nothing new to his experience.

"That's done with," said Harvey. "Wonder if they can stick it on?"

"Not they," replied Jack.

"Funny idea, a cove sending for his ear."

"Very. Wasn't my answer studiously polite?" asked Jack.

"Quite O. K. He's nothing to grumble at," replied Harvey.

They went for a drive, and Jack could not help wondering if he should meet with Frank Davis in England.

If Hunston made his way back, and Davis really went to England, he would have two determined enemies to contend with.

"I don't care," he muttered, in his dare-devil way; "one's only got one arm, and the other minus an ear. What is the good of a man with only one ear? Let them rip, they can't hurt me."

CHAPTER XL.

FRANK DAVIS AND HIS FATHER—PLOT FOR REVENGE—AH SING THE CHINAMAN—POPPY LAND—AN OPIUM FACTORY.

Like most young men of a daring and adventurous disposition, our hero was apt at times to be a little over confident.

It is easy to despise an enemy, but the one you look upon with contempt may be powerful for evil against you.

Frank Davis was mad with rage at the loss of his ear, which of course disfigured him for life.

He had heard of artificial legs, arms, and eyes, but never of an artificial ear.

It was a void that he was afraid could never be supplied.

Being of a vain disposition, he thought it would sadly mar his appearance in the eyes of the ladies.

He felt that he must have a terrible revenge upon Harkaway.

On his way home he called at the house of a doctor who had attended him before.

All the medical man could do for him was to stop the bleeding, and put some salve on the injured part to allay the pain.

"I can not put it on," said the doctor, as Davis unrolled the piece of paper in which the ear was wrapped.

"Am I to be a maimed man for life?" asked Davis.

"Yes. There is no help for it."

"Can't I have a substitute?"

"Well, you might get one in London or Paris, but not in Singapore. How did it happen?"

"An enemy tore it off. Curse him, he shall repent it. I feel as if I could shoot or stab him."

"Do nothing rash. Go home, consult your father, and take a rest."

This was good advice.

Frank paid the doctor his fee and went away, almost broken-hearted at his disfigurement.

His mother had been dead some years, and he lived alone with his father.

Mr. Davis senior's Christian name was Josiah. He was of Jewish extraction, and a successful merchant in the opium line, which is the principal trade in the Straits Settlements.

He had an opium factory a few miles out of Singapore, and employed a number of Chinamen.

These, about a hundred altogether, lived with their families close by in a village.

Here were opium-smoking dens, Joss-houses, Chinese tea-drinking places, gambling shops, and other attractions peculiar to Chinese communities.

The fields of poppies from which the opium was made was quite a sight when in flower.

Many visitors came from Singapore to see the many miles of matchless colour waving in the wind.

The country residence of Mr. Davis was not more than a mile from his opium factory.

It was here that Frank betook himself when he left the doctor, whom he consulted about his ear.

The millionaire merchant was seated in his study, looking over a map of the island.

A fine property was offered for sale, and he was inclined to buy it.

Singapore is only a small island, about twenty-seven miles in length and in breadth fourteen.

Josiah Davis already owned a goodly portion of it.

He intended it all for his son Frank, whom he loved so much and was so proud of.

Frank was to go to Oxford University in England soon, and be educated like an English gentleman.

His father thought he was very handsome, and ought to marry the daughter of a lord at least.

His horror can be easily imagined and his rage pictured, when Frank entered his study wounded.

It was easy to see at a glance that his ear was missing, for that side of his head was flat, and his cheek was smeared with blood.

"Good heaven!" cried Mr. Davis. "Is it an accident, or the deed of an enemy?"

"The latter."

"You are disfigured for life, my poor boy!" said his father, feelingly.

"Yes," snapped Frank.

"Who did it? We must nave a terrible revenge for this. What did Moses say when he gave the law to the Israelites, who are our own people?"

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, father."

"Very true. You shall have justice, never fear. Tell me all."

Frank did not hesitate to do so.

In a few minutes Josiah Davis had heard all that his son could tell him about Jack Harkaway and his party.

"I would give any thing I possess," concluded Frank, "to injure him as he has injured me, or to kill the fellow right out."

"We must first get him in our power," replied the merchant.

"How is that to be done?"

"Let me think."

Mr. Davis rested his chin on his hand and appeared to be plunged in deep thought.

He knew well, from what he had heard, that Jack was wary as well as brave.

In addition to this he was surrounded by friends.

"My opium factory is a source of attraction to visitors to Singapore," said Mr. Davis at length. "They wind up by drinking tea at Ah Sing's house in the Chinese village and sometimes smoke a pipe of opium to see what it is like. Ah Sing is a very clever fellow, artful as a weasel. If Ah Sing could entice Harkaway here, something might be done towards our revenge."

"Good!" exclaimed Frank, nodding his head approvingly.

"Shall we try it?"

"Certainly; it is a first-rate scheme. What will you do to Harkaway if you get hold of him? Cut off his ear?"

"Father Abraham! I'll cut them *both* off," roared Mr. Davis.

"Bravo! That's your sort!"

"I'll let him know what it is to mutilate my son!"

"I can scarcely find words to thank you," said Frank. "My blood is boiling. I shall never rest until I get square with that man."

"You shall do so, and that, too, before many hours have passed over your head."

"It is necessary to act quickly."

"Why so?"

"Because Harkaway and party are going to England by the mail steamer which is due at this port either to-day or to-morrow," said Frank.

"She will not be here for a week," answered Mr. Davis.

"How do you know that?"

"I had a telegram this morning from Malacca stating that her machinery had broken down, and that she had gone into dock for repairs."

"That is excellent; it will give us time."

"We must not be seen in the matter," continued the merchant. "I must study my good name. Ah Sing has been foreman in my employ for several years; he can not refuse to do any thing I require."

"Where is the Chinaman who would not do anything for money?" laughed Frank.

"True. At a price, John Chinaman will break every law in the Decalogue."

"We must send for him," suggested Frank.

"I expect him here every moment with a report," replied Mr. Davis, adding, "Ah! Frank. You shall be able to laugh as well as this wild rover, Harkaway."

"I heard his friend, Harvey, state that on their return to England they intended to matriculate at Oxford, and stay there until they graduated."

"It would not be nice for him to point to your one ear, unless you could point out that he had none at all."

"I should like to slit his nose, too, as they used to do in the days of the Star Chamber," cried Frank.

"No, no. It will not be right to overdo the thing."

"The vicious young cub deserves it."

"Justice, according to the law of Moses, you shall have," said Mr. Davis; "an ear for an ear."

"And the other one thrown in by way of interest or overweight," replied Frank, forcing a smile.

"Of course. We Hebrews could do nothing without interest."

As he spoke, a Malay servant (nearly all work in those regions is done by Chinese and Malays) announced that his excellency's slave, Ah Sing, humbly demanded an audience.

"Let him come in at once," said the merchant.

Ah Sing was a little, spare-figured man, with almond-shaped eyes, a mouth which seemed made to grin, high cheek bones, and an expression which appeared to say, "I wasn't born yesterday."

He presented a sheet of paper covered with figures, which was the balance-sheet of the week at the opium works.

"Taken as read," exclaimed Mr. Davis. "We will postpone business, as I have something else to talk about, which ought to put a thousand dollars into your pocket."

Ah Sing's eyes glistened with inherent cupidity.

He was a native of Canton.

For years he had been saving all the money he could to take back to China, where he intended his bones should rest when he died.

"Vellee good," replied Ah Sing.

The Chinaman husbanded his words, as if he thought that talking was a waste of energy.

"You often show people over my factory, take them to your tea-shop in Chinatown, and make money out of them."

"You not tellee me that wrongee," replied Ah Sing.

"I am not saying so now."

"Ah Sing makee money allee samee Englishmans."

"I have heard that you send a printed circular to the hotels. Have you one in your possession? If so, show it me."

Ah Sing did not hesitate a moment; he knew he had his master's confidence. If he supplemented his salary by showing strangers over the opium works, and taking them to his tea-shop, he did not rob his employer.

His accounts were always satisfactory.

He put his hand in the pocket of the loose dress he wore and handed Josiah Davis a printed paper.

Its contents were as follows:—

"In the name of the sun, moon and stars, the strictly honourable Ah Sing sendeth greeting to all intelligent strangers staying in the English City of Singapore, at which all ships call.

"Ah Sing is the head of the great opium factory at Chinatown. Please take particular notice.

"He is also proprietor of the Pagoda tea-house, where you can have the best Souchong, Bohea, and Pekoe. N.B.—Leaves not coloured; pure tea.

"There are rooms to experiment in smoking the opium pipe, which will produce dreams of bliss. It is a cheap Heaven. NOTE.—This is true.

"Come for a drive to Chinatown; only five miles out. Ask for the strictly honourable Ah Sing.

"For one dollar, or two rupees, he will show each one all, and can refresh with tea of the best, and pipe at Pagoda House for same sum.

"The poppies in fields very fine view just now.

"Ah Sing, the strictly honourable and highly considered.

"Chinatown opium works, as above.

"Or your kindly, sentimental, and gentlemanly favours respectfully beg.

"AH SING."

Mr. Davis could not help laughing when he had read this comical circular.

It showed that the Chinaman had a good opinion of himself.

Frank also joined in the mirth.

"So, you rascal," said Mr. Davis, "that is how you make money out of me?"

Ah Sing bowed politely, and indulged in a quiet grin.

"Must livee somehow," he replied.

"That is all right; it does not hurt me, so long as you do your work. Listen!"

"Speakee. The recipient of your bounty is not deafee."

"Take one of your precious circulars to the Hotel

Victoria in Singapore, and send it up to a gentleman named Harkaway."

"Yes, remember namee; the honourable Harkawayee."

"Persuade him to come to the Pagoda tea-house. You can show him over the works if you like, but do not mention my name. Get him to smoke opium or drug him."

Ah Sing looked at the carpet as if he were admiring the pattern.

"Do you hear me?" cried Mr. Davis.

"One thousand dollars for only thatee thingee?" the Chinaman asked.

"More than that. When this young man is stupefied, you must cut off his ears."

"Policemans takee me then."

"Carry him out amongst the poppies. Do it in a field, and he will not be able to prove anything against you. All he will know when he wakes up will be that his ears are gone."

"Vellee good. Me do it, your high mightiness excellent master. I see about it this afternoonee. To-morrow I will be an attender to Harkawayee."

"Don't make a mull of it," said Frank.

Ah Sing assured the father and son that they might rely on his discretion, and after being given some refreshment he retired to carry out the preliminaries of this nefarious scheme.

Walking back to Chinatown through the poppy-fields, which were all aglow with bloom, he gave himself up to thought.

The town was composed of houses built of wood, dried in the hot sun; houses which would burn like tinder if they once caught fire.

At the Pagoda tea-house, which was his domicile, he obtained a mule he was in the habit of riding, and started for Singapore.

He put on a bland, child-like and inoffensive air.

It was well calculated to deceive anybody.

No one would have thought that his heart was full of guile.

As the sun was declining in the west in a flood of golden splendour, he arrived at the city.

Leaving the mule in a stable, Ah Sing walked to the hotel where Jack Harkaway and his friends were staying.

The entire service of the hotel was conducted by Chinamen, who rejoiced in long pig-tails, the glory of their race.

Accosting one of his countrymen, the indefatigable Ah Sing said—

"Havee stayee the English Mandarin, Harkawayee?"

"Yes," was the reply. "First floor numberee sixee."

"What your honourable namee?"

"Hi Chung."

"Veree vellee. Hi! here is halfee dollar to let me show him a trade letteree."

"What is the namee of your esteemed familee?" asked Hi Chung.

"I rejoice in the time-honoured name of Ah Sing."

"You can be a proceeder to numberee sixee, and if there are any forks or spoons missing, the distinguished policeman will look for Ah Sing."

"We are not a stealee familee," replied Ah Sing, shaking his pig-tail angrily.

"May you never losee your hairee!" said Hi Chung.

This remark was meant to convey a wish, sarcastically expressed, that he might never go to prison.

The first operation a prisoner is subjected to on entering a jail is to have his hair cut.

A Chinaman holds that he is disgraced for life if his much cherished pig-tail is cut off.

As he kneels on the hard concrete of the prison floor, and the warder's scissors, as large as shears, snip off his pig-tail, he seems to undergo excruciating mental agony.

Ah Sing smiled, waved his hand paternally to Hi Chung, and went upstairs.

Harvey had a slight attack of ague, and having taken a strong dose of quinine, had gone to bed.

Jack was playing a game of chess with Professor Mole, who was jubilant at having checkmated his opponent.

Emily was in her own apartment, preparing for dinner, which would be served in about an hour.

Monday had thrown himself down in a corner on a rug, and was dozing like a cat.

It was a peculiarity of his that he slept with one eye and one ear open.

His sense of hearing was so acute, that he could hear the slightest sound.

"I think, Master Jack," exclaimed Mr. Mole, "that you will own yourself beaten this time."

"It is only the first game, sir; best two out of three, you know," Jack replied.

"Ah, hum! That is one way of getting out of it; but perhaps there is some game you play better than this."

"Don't chaff."

"If so, I shall be glad to oblige you."

It was at this moment that Ah Sing arrived outside number six.

The disciple of Confucius knocked at the door.

"Come in!" cried Jack.

The terra-cotta coloured son of a Mongolian did not hesitate to enter.

He smiled unctuously, as only a Chinaman can smile, and bowed.

Advancing to Jack, he held up one of his printed circulars.

"For the high and mightee mandarin, Lord Harkawayee," he said.

"Thank you," replied Jack. "I'm getting on in the world. I didn't know I had been raised to the peerage!"

"Be a condescender and readee my paperee."

"With pleasure. Sit down."

"It is not for me to sit in the distinguished presence of so great a mandarin."

"All right. Stand if you like," said Jack.

Mr. Mole looked at Jack with a smile.

"That observation of yours reminds me," he remarked, "that I ought to ask you what you are going to stand. I vanquished you, and to the victor belong the spoils."

"Have what you like. Ring the bell, sir, and let me read this heathen Chinee's effusion."

"Is it good?"

"It strikes me as being very funny. You shall see it and judge for yourself presently."

When he had finished reading it, he gave it to Mr. Mole.

"Opium-making," said the professor; "that must be an interesting process. I should much like to see it. I vote we go. It will be a new experience to smoke the pipe of peace."

"The poppy-fields, I hear, are lovely in the extreme," Jack remarked. "I do not mind smoking a pipe of opium

for the fun of the thing, but I should be very sorry to contract a habit of it, as it is a most soul-deadening custom."

"Horrible! It makes a slave of a man. I say, Mr. Strictly Honourable Ah Sing, what part of China do you come from?"

"Canton, most venerable," replied Ah Sing.

"Indeed! I have a tea-garden there. Did you ever hear the name of Mole?"

Ah Sing tapped his forehead and reflected for a brief space.

"I think he knows you, sir," said Jack.

"Of course he does. They must have heard of my tea-garden. You talk like a child."

"Canton is a big place."

"Wait and hear what the fellow has to say; he looks very respectable and highly intelligent."

"Chinese people are doubtful characters, sir."

"You are easily prejudiced. Because you fancy he is going to say something good of me, you are annoyed."

"Not at all. It would be a novelty."

"Harkaway, you are insulting. My age ought to entitle me to respect, but you are my boy. I helped to educate you; I brought you up; I taught the young idea how to shoot; I formed your mind, and made you the fine character you are; and bless you, I forgive you."

"That is good of you," Jack answered.

"I am of a forgiving disposition."

"That is something new about you."

"Say what you like, it is a censorious world, and boys are sadly given to chaff."

"I am not a boy now—I am a young man and a gentleman."

"What am I?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Oh, don't ask riddles! You wouldn't like it if I called you an old humbug," replied Jack impatiently.

"Harkaway, you will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave!"

"Bosh!"

"Harkaway, you are like a lively puppy; you will bark away. Be you silent."

"Well," said Jack, "I like your style, old man."

Just then Ah Sing lifted his head.

The recollection had come to him.

"Yes," he exclaimed, "I do remember one of your namee. There was Ah Fool Mole."

The professor reddened.

His ire began to rise rapidly.

"What do you mean, you rascally heathen?" he cried.

"Meanee nothingee."

"You called me a fool!"

"That was the namee. Ah Fool! China namee."

"It may be a porcelain name, or a Bohemian glass name, as well as a China one, but I don't like it."

"Can't helpee that. They callee him so," replied Ah Sing.

"What was he?"

"Carree water. Sell in the streetee."

"Common water-carrier?" gasped the professor.

"Yes; no goodee—no goodee."

"A low fellow!"

"Veree lowee, till they raised him a bit."

"Oh! they raised him?"

"Yes, they raisee Ah Fool Mole."

The professor smiled blandly.

"You see, Jack," he exclaimed, "we are getting at the facts, in a gradual manner."

"We are a long time about it," replied Jack.

"Don't be impatient."

"It is a long yarn and a tough one, sir."

"Don't you wish to hear about my namesake in Canton, China?"

"Ah Fool Mole?"

"Do you want to hear or not?"

"I don't particularly care about it, though it may be family history, my dear sir."

"Don't be unkind. Will you listen?"

Jack crossed his legs and lighted a cigarette.

"Anything for a quiet life," he answered. "Go ahead."

"You will see that Ah Fool—I don't like the name——"

"It is good enough for you!"

"Will you be quiet?"

"Go ahead, I say."

"You will see that Ah Fool went to the front like a solid man; he elevated himself," continued the professor.

"I hope so."

"Just wait. Now, my Celestial friend, go on with your story. What became of my namesake?"

Ah Sing rolled his almond eyes.

"They raisee him," he replied.

"In what way?"

"They hangee him!"

Mr. Mole jumped about a foot in the air.

"What!" he cried. "Hanged him?"

"Yes, hangee Ah Fool Mole."

"You lying scoundrel! What for?"

"He killee a man, to rob him of a dollar," answered Ah Sing.

With a gasp Mr. Mole sank into a chair.

"I won't believe it," he said.

"The man lived in Canton before he came here, and he ought to know, sir," Jack replied.

"It's a base libel on a respectable family."

"Certainly it is a blot on your escutcheon—I'll admit that; but perhaps you weren't born to be drowned."

"Thank you."

"Oh, don't mention it," said Jack, carelessly.

"You mean to insinuate that I ought to be hanged, or shall be hanged."

"Like your namesake, Ah Fool Mole, of Canton?"

"Do you intend to convey that?"

"People don't always get their deserts, sir," was Jack's answer.

"You are quick at repartee, but allow me to tell you that people can be too sharp."

"What about Ah Fool Mole, of Canton, who——"

"Drop it."

"Who was—er—elevated?"

"No connection of mine, Harkaway. I wouldn't own him."

"Uncle or cousin, sir?"

"I wouldn't find him," replied the professor. "He does not exist in my genealogical tree."

"Some kind of relation. I hope the complaint does not run in the family."

"No more; drop it. The subject is distasteful to me. I would not have Ah Fool—hate the name!—in my family as a gift."

Jack laughed.

"Oh, you can grin," said Mr. Mole. "I've seen a donkey laugh when he came across a thistle."

"Were you gazing in a looking-glass, sir?"

"Will you hold your tongue?"

"Can't do it, sir. It's a way I've got," answered Jack.

While they were engaged in this animated, but somewhat acrimonious discussion, Ah Sing had strayed to a side table.

On it was a galvanic battery in a wooden case.

It was charged up to five hundred volts.

Jack had bought it for Emily, who had not been very strong lately.

The doctor said it would tone up her nervous system.

There were two brass knobs to hold, one in each hand.

Somebody had to turn a handle, and the electricity was conveyed to the person holding the knobs.

It was impossible to let go while the shock lasted.

If the handle of the machine were turned violently, the one who held the knobs suffered great pain, the whole system being convulsed with electricity.

When the handle ceased turning, the current was stopped.

Mr. Mole noticed that Ah Sing was looking curiously at the instrument.

"My friend," he said, "do you wish to investigate the mysteries of science?"

"What kind of thingee is this?" asked Ah Sing.

"A revigorator. It puts new life into you; it is better than all the massage and electric belts."

"Me tryee it."

"If you like."

Jack nudged the professor's arm.

"Let him alone," he whispered.

"Not I," replied Mole. "I'll pay him out for Ah Fool. I'll give him a twister, or I'm not here."

"You are vindictive."

"Listen to his death-wail in a minute."

"Spare him."

"Not I."

"The strong ought always to be merciful," remarked Jack.

"I'd like to flay him alive, the rascal. I'll Ah Fool him, see if I don't."

"He couldn't help it if your relation was hanged."

"It's a falsehood; he was not."

"Ah Sing, the strictly honourable, says so."

"He's a—well, I won't use bad language; it is unbecoming for one in my position to do so, though I am sorely tried. Wait a while."

"What for?"

"I'll make an example of him."

Saying this, Mr. Mole walked up to Ah Sing.

"Take the brass knobs in your hands," he exclaimed.

"That veree simplee," replied Ah Sing.

He did as he was directed.

"Hold tight," continued the professor.

"You bettee."

"Are you ready?"

"Allee rightee. Me readee; go aheadee," answered Ah Sing.

Mr. Mole turned the handle of the battery.

The electric current began to run up Ah Sing's arms, and pervade his body.

He writhed, twisted, and contorted himself.

"Stoppee, stoppee!" he cried.

"Not yet. You're in for it, my friend," replied Mole.

"Oh, ough! I can not beare it!"

"You'll have to. I'll make you skip lively."

Ah Sing began to dance like a bear on hot bricks.

"Leavee off!" he yelled. "Devil's gottee hold of me!"

"I'll give you Ah Fool!"

Mr. Mole continued to turn the handle vigorously.

The perspiration rolled in streams down the contorted face of Ah Sing.

The unfortunate Chinaman shouted, stamped and struggled, but all in vain.

He was utterly powerless to let go the handles, which by electric force had him as in a vice.

His hair bristled, and his long pig-tail swung to and fro like the pendulum of a clock.

"Ah Fool Mole, am I?" said the professor, slackening the electric current a little.

"Notee you," replied Ah Sing.

"Who then?"

"Your relations in Canton. Lettee go. Me be a paralysee soon!"

"Not before you apologise."

"Me makee a mistakee. Veree sorree."

"You never knew a relation of mine of that name."

"Notee Mole. Thinkee now, it was Cole."

"Ah Fool Cole. That is more like it. Cole, you see, Jack, Cole; he has mixed the names up."

"Release him, sir," replied Jack. "We all know you are an awful mole at times."

"Do you join in as well in ridiculing your mentor and instructor—your faithful Achates, who has accompanied you in your Odyssey?"

"Cut the Greek references, sir, and come to the business of the evening."

"I will, and more than that, I will give you a glass of the finest wine you ever tasted," said Mr. Mole.

"Bravo! You are a brick."

The professor released Ah Sing, who trembled for a little while, but did not seem much the worse for the galvanism he had been subjected to.

In fact he was more frightened than hurt.

Electricity, except in the shape of a thunder-storm, was an entirely new thing to him.

"How do you feel now, my Cochin China rooster?" asked Mr. Mole in a jocular tone.

"Me feelee like jumpee over the moonee," answered Ah Sing, whose nerves were yet quivering.

"Was it nice?"

"Bad. Me glad it all overee."

"You shall have a little wine. I did not tell you, Jack, that I bought a quarter-cask of imported Cadiz sherry yesterday, and had it put in yonder cupboard, tapped and ready for use. I am not able to bear the hotel-charges for wines. Let the Heathen Chinee wait on us."

"If the strictly honourable and highly respectable one, will condescend to do so," replied Jack.

"Ha, ha! Let him refuse, that is all!"

"You have been sampling that sherry, sir, on the strict Q.T., haven't you?"

"Only a glass or two—a mere trifle. It is very good though; I can recommend it."

"Don't irritate the Celestial too much."

"Bah! In the language of the ring, what price a Mongolian or a Malay in a conflict with me? Pish! I should pulverise him!" said the professor, snapping his fingers contemptuously at Ah Sing.

"We all know you are brave, sir."

"Have I not proved it in a dozen fights of Homeric dimensions? I am a very Ajax for valour!"

"I'm sure you deserve the Victoria Cross."

"Pshaw! The only cross I bear is the worry of looking after and taking care of you."

"Don't you like it?"

"No, I do not, frankly."

"Then you know what you can do."

"What is that?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Do the other thing—lump it," replied Jack.

The professor sighed deeply.

"Oh, the ingratitude of the rising generation!" he groaned. "Boys were very different when I was young to what they are now. I was taught to respect my elders; you scoff at them."

"Do I scoff well, sir? I like to do everything well."

"Alas! too well," replied Mr. Mole, "and well I know it. You blight my life; yes—you are a blighter."

"Thank you. That is a new name."

"I can conscientiously call you nothing but a blighter. You were told in your boyhood days that, to have faithfully learnt the fine arts, and acquired softened manners, would prevent people from being fierce and wild. You drive me to drink."

"It strikes me you do not want much driving."

"Peace! Enough of this. Friend Sing, take this key: it turns the tap of the sherry cask."

"Turnee the tapee?" asked Ah Sing.

"Yes. In the cupboard, on the shelf, you will find a crystal jug and glasses. Draw the wine, as Horace—dear, good, old convivial Horace—sings, in the First Book of Odes. I thrashed you once for not construing that correctly, Harkaway—you must remember it. Now is the time to drink; now we will beat the earth with a quick foot, which is a synonym for dancing."

"I'm not at school now, thank goodness."

"Ingrate!"

"Go on, sir, call me names."

"Let me speak of Anacreon, who loved to see the ruby wine sparkle in the cup, what time his slave held it for him! Ah Sing shall be my Ganymede."

"Shut up," said Jack, who did not feel classically inclined.

"You know those lines beginning——"

"Hire a hall if you want to spout, and give a lecture."

"Has contact with savages blunted your mind and deadened your soul to a sense of the sublime and beautiful?"

"Give us a rest," cried Jack, impatiently.

Mr. Mole turned up the whites of his eyes.

"*O tempora, O mores,*" he muttered.

While this conversation—if a one-sided dialogue can be dignified with that name—was going on, Ah Sing had opened the cupboard and drawn the wine.

But the wily Chinaman had done more than that.

He intended to have his revenge on Mr. Mole for the galvanic shock he had received.

When he had drawn the wine, he threw the key into a dark corner and left the tap running.

"Ha!" exclaimed the professor, "this is something like wine. It cost me a large sum; it is an old, high-priced wine. Superlativa, the merchants who meet on the Rialto call it."

"That's a good word, sir; I'd have that stuffed," said Jack.

"None of your nonsense, if you please."

"When stuffed, put in a glass case."

"Superlativa is——"

"We don't want too much 'Superlativa, sir, but just enough; any more would be a superfluity."

"Taste it."

"With all the pleasure in life."

Mr. Mole filled three glasses, when suddenly his ear heard a noise as of water running rapidly.

He cast his eye towards the cupboard.

The truth became apparent in a moment.

Ah Sing had not turned the tap off, and his special Superlativa, imported from Cadiz, in Spain, was running rapidly to waste.

As a matter of fact, the wine had never seen Spain, but was a vile decoction manufactured at the Cape.

There were a dozen headaches and other aches in every quart of it, as anyone who has drunk Cape wine will testify.

"You scoundrel!" cried Mr. Mole, "turn that tap off. You've left it running."

Ah Sing ran to the cupboard.

"Stoppee the tappee!" he said.

"Yes, quick; all my wine will run away. Think of the cost of it! The ceiling below will be soaked—the carpets all spoiled. Won't they bring me in a bill. Here's another blight! Oh, you idiot! You, you——"

"Can't findee the key," Ah Sing answered.

"What have you done with it?"

"It has fallen somewhere. Can not tellee where."

"Look for it, you son of a sea-cook."

"Oh, the language, sir!" put in Jack. "Did the gentlemanly Horace speak like that?"

"I'll make him feel worse than a boiled owl presently."

"Is that according to Anacreon, sir?"

"The wretched blighter! I'll do for him; I'll be the death of the Heathen," shouted Mr. Mole.

Ah Sing looked at Jack.

"You comee to-morrow," he said.

"That's settled," replied Jack.

"Allee rightee."

Saying this, Ah Sing dodged a cnair and a couple of spittoons that Mole threw at him, and ran out of the room.

Going to the cupboard, the professor looked ruefully at the cask, from which the wine was running as fast as it could.

"Oh, dear!" he exclaimed, "this is indeed a blight. I shall have to turn the cask base over apex."

"Is that English for upside down?"

"Never mind the interpretation. Here goes. I will save all I possibly can."

As he spoke, the professor put the cask on end, and the flow at once stopped.

Harkaway tasted the wine.

"I say," he cried, "where did you get this stuff?"

"What's the matter with it?"

"I call it sudden death."

"My dear boy," replied Mr. Mole, "your taste is not educated."

"I know good wine from bad."

"Ah! you have a lot to learn. I will go out for a walk and see the shipping in the harbour; I love a ship. I go on board, I give my card to the purser, and seeing that I am a learned man and a traveller, he treats me with——"

"Whisky!" Jack interrupted.

"No; with respect."

Putting his hat on, Mr. Mole strode away indignantly.

Scarcely was he gone than Monday sprang up from the skin on which he had been lying.

"Hullo, ebony, what's the matter with you?" Jack enquired.

"Mast' Jack, 'um want to speak to you," replied Monday.

There was a strange light in his eyes.

CHAPTER XLI.

MONDAY GOES ON A LITTLE JOURNEY AND ENCOUNTERS MORE ADVENTURES THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.

Jack always paid the greatest attention to any thing that came from Monday.

He had faith in the sagacity of his black servant and companion.

"Out with it; I'm listening," he said.

"You and Mist' Mole going to-morrow to that Chinaman's house, sah?" asked Monday.

"Yes, just for the fun of the thing, and to while away the time. We are stuck here for another week owing to the breakdown of the mail-steamer for Europe, you know."

"Ah Sing am one rascal thief."

"How can you tell?"

"Very easy, sah," answered Monday. "Nature write it on um bad, bold, yet cunning face."

"I thought he looked as guileless and simple as a child."

"Put all dat on. Chinaman got a different face for ebery hour in the day."

"Are they such a bad lot then?"

"The worst in the world," said Monday; "everybody tell you so. No Chinamen in Heaven! The Lord won't hab nuffin' to do with them. Where Ah Sing live?"

"At a place called Chinatown. He is manager of an opium factory, and runs a tea-house and smoke-room. Calls his drum the Pagoda, I think."

"Think I go there," observed Monday.

"What for? Do you smoke opium?"

"The Lord forbid. Bad habit that, Mast' Jack; play Old Nick with the nervous system. Don't mind a pipe ob good, sound, honest tobacco, but bar smoke opium-joint."

"What are you going to Chinatown for, then?"

"Jes' to take a little journey, Mast' Jack, and find out who dis Ah Sing chap is."

"Precisely what I have told you," replied Harkaway.

"That is his story; not good enough for dis child. Ah Sing got mighty bad face; me not like um. Berry likely him visit all one big plant to hurt you."

"How can that be?"

"You forgot Frank Davis already?" queried Monday. "If so, you got berry poor memory."

"I don't think we shall be troubled by him. I sickened him when I nailed his ear up."

"Who told you that he had forgiven him injury like that? Jes' very thing to rankle in um mind. You sit down and think all safe. Bah! you what street boys call um mug. Hab more sense, sah!"

"Don't bother me. I shall go and see Ah Sing to-morrow," persisted Jack.

"Me go to-night and find out."

"I hope to have a lark with Sing and Mole. Did you hear Sing tell the professor that in Canton he knew an Ah Fool Mole? It made me laugh, but didn't Mole get savage?"

"Me hear and see, too. Mist' Mole so mad he hop on one leg."

"He soon loses his temper now, but he was always rather thin-skinned and touchy," remarked Jack.

"Um got good heart all same, sah," replied Monday.

"Yes; he is very faithful and affectionate."

"T'ink all the world ob you, Mast' Jack. Jes' same as Monday. Bleeve both die for you, if want um."

Jack smiled pleasantly at this speech, which showed how highly esteemed he was by those about him.

"I hope I shall never have occasion to call upon either of you to make such a sacrifice," he rejoined.

"Hab a glass of Mist' Mole's wine, then I be off to see what kind of a person this Ah Sing is."

"Help yourself."

Monday poured out a glass, drank it, and made a wry face.

"What kind of stuff you call this, Mast' Jack?" he asked. "It um worse than a sour grape. Pah! not up to much. Kind of hog's wash, I should t'ink."

"Some one has imposed on Mole. He thinks it is fine wine."

"Want to insure um life before anyone drink much of this. It what the sailors call very bad booze. No more."

"Declined with thanks, as the editor said to the schoolgirl's poem," observed Jack.

"Missey Emily go with you to-morrow to opium place?" asked Monday.

"No, I sha'n't take her. That kind of thing wouldn't interest a lady."

"Mast' Harvey too much sick with ague to go. Jes' you and Mist' Mole, that is all. I see. Well, I proceed first, and if there any scheme on to hurt you, I find um out and give you warning."

"Good old Monday," exclaimed Jack.

Monday grinned, showing his white teeth, and was off like a shot.

While pretending to be asleep on the skins, he had listened and narrowly watched Ah Sing's sallow countenance.

In the hall of the hotel he saw Hi Chung, the waiter who had spoken to Ah Sing on his entrance.

Monday had a supreme contempt for all Chinese, thinking the men of Limbi and even the Pisangs far superior.

The Chinese returned the compliment by hating the inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula.

At the same time they dreaded them as a brave, fierce, and warlike race, which the Chinese certainly are not.

"Hi, hi! Mist' Hi Chung," cried Monday. "You tell me the way to a place called Chinatown?"

"Veree vellee. It is the road out of the city on the

rightee. A sign-post will direct more nearee," replied Hi Chung. "Do you go to the strictly honourable, highly intelligent, and magnificently uprightee Ah Sing?"

"That is my business, not yours. You half-washed niggers are too cheeky," cried Monday; "and as for um friend, Ah Sing, I wouldn't trust him with the care of one single dollar."

"Halfee-washee, eh? What kind of nigger you callee yourself?" demanded Hi Chung.

"I'm one of the dandy kind from um island of Limbi, where we eat every morning a Chinaman for um breakfast. I'll eat you."

"Cannibal, eatee manee!"

"That is the sort of a nigger I am, you bet," said Monday, opening his mouth wide.

The Chinaman was alarmed.

He fell on his knees in a state of abject terror.

"No eatee me," he cried. "Me veree sorry to be cheekee to so distinguished a person. Your high mightiness will forgive the humblest of your slaves."

"Mind you are always as civil as this, or I'll have your pig-tail. Remember who I am in future!"

Saying this, Monday gave Hi Chung a kick which sent him sprawling several feet up the hall.

"Pah!" he muttered, as he quitted the hotel, "Chinese no good, except to lie and steal money to gamble with. One must kick um to make um civil."

Hi Chung got up and bowed.

"Thankee veree muchee, O Lord of the White Elephant!" he exclaimed mildly.

Taking no heed of him, Monday walked in the direction indicated, and soon found the road leading to Chinatown.

"Mast' Jack too easy," he muttered, "too trusting in his own strength. Me find out all; Monday business man up to date. Soon see what Ah Sing is about, and not be long-winded over it either."

Acquaintance with civilisation had taught Monday many things which he had never dreamed of in his island of Limbi.

Among these was the practise of carrying an umbrella in one hand to keep off the sun, and a fan in the other to brush off those everlasting pests, the flies and mosquitoes.

By the time he arrived at Chinatown, he was tired and thirsty.

He had imbibed a liking for tea, and was looking forward to a cup of the refreshing beverage.

Almost one of the first buildings that attracted his attention was the Pagoda house.

A signboard, with English writing on, informed everybody that it was kept by the highly respectable and strictly honourable Ah Sing, formerly of Canton, China.

Chinese lanterns hung over the verandahs under which people were sitting at small tables drinking tea.

There were also rooms inside where parties could make themselves comfortable.

Ah Sing was standing at the door with a big fan in his hand, and a cheroot in his mouth, one of the best that Manilla could produce.

"Good-evening," said Monday. "I have come from Singapore to drink some tea and smoke some pipe. Everyone talk so much of um Pagoda house."

"Everything of the very fine best," replied Ah Sing. "Souchong, Bohea, Pekoe, that is delicate green leafee, lovalee flavour. Sittee downee."

"Will you join me in a cup? I will pay."

"Withee pleasure," answered Ah Sing.

"I am of the highly respectable, and I can see you are the samee."

"What you charge for um cup?"

"Quarter of a dollar to a well-connected, true-bred gentleman like you, descended from the firstee familees."

Monday sat down under the verandah at a small table by himself, and presently Ah Sing joined him, bearing the teapot and two cups on a tray.

"I waitee on you," he said, "instead of my servantees. Wantee to talkee?"

"As you please."

"Where you comee from?"

"Nowhere in particular," answered Monday; "a place called Limbi."

Ah Sing shook his head.

"Not knowee," he replied. "So many islands round here. What your business?"

"Big merchant," said Monday; "I trade in sponges and shells."

"Spongees and shellees. Good!"

"What do you do besides keeping this tea-house?" inquired Monday, with an innocent far-away look in his eyes.

Clever as Ah Sing undoubtedly was, he did not think that Monday was fishing for information.

"Manage large opium factory for high-class mandarin," was the ready reply.

"What is his name?"

"Davis."

At hearing this answer, Monday nearly let his teacup fall from his hand, but he controlled himself.

"You feelee badee?" asked Ah Sing.

"Oh, no. Um got a touch of the country ague. Make um hand shake, that is all," replied Monday.

Other customers came in, and Ah Sing, the strictly honourable, went away to attend to them in person.

Monday was convinced, when he heard that the Chinaman was the manager of Mr. Davis's opium factory, that there was a plot on foot.

He waited, however, for further developments.

Nothing, however, occurred to arrest his attention.

He called for a cigar, and smoked it placidly, being very fond of smoking, which was a habit he had acquired from the sailors on board ship.

He was not aware that all the cigars sold by Ah Sing were, to suit the taste of his customers, soaked in a solution of opium.

This produced a drowsy, dreamy condition of mind in those habituated to it; while to those not used to the drug, in any shape, it induced sleep.

On Monday it had this effect.

He wanted to keep wide awake, but he fell fast asleep in his chair, his head resting against the wall.

Scarcely had he been asleep five minutes, than Frank Davis walked up to the Pagoda house.

His eyes instantly fell upon the well-known features of Monday.

He was alarmed at his presence there, for it boded no good for the success of his plans.

The cause of his visit to the Pagoda house, was his anxiety to know if Ah Sing could get Jack to venture as far as Chinatown.

Making sure that Monday was really asleep, and not shamming, he hastily sought Ah Sing.

The strictly honourable one was in a private room where the tea was made.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "you comee too soonee."

"How did you get on?" asked Frank.

"First chop," replied Ah Sing. "To-morrow Harkawayee is to visit me, and also a friend callee old Ah Fool Mole."

"I know him, but I fear there is something wrong."

"No, me doee the business allee rightee, samee as Englishman," Ah Sing protested.

"Are you aware that you have a spy here?"

"Hongs and Gongs!" cried Ah Sing, who was not much given to the use of expletives.

"You may well say that, and add Chingaring-a-Chopsticks, or any other forcible expression in your outlandish lingo," replied Frank Davis.

"Where is he, this spyee?"

"Asleep under the verandah. He is a black fellow, or coloured person as they term it; a Lascar kind of chap."

"Why, me talkee to him and he treatee to tea. Veree nice-spoken man," said Ah Sing.

"You're a fool. He'd cut your throat and mine too."

"Who is he?"

"Harkaway's nigger, that's who he is, and I tell you that he is down here for no good. He has been sent, or come on his own hook, to spy out the land."

"Hum," muttered Ah Sing. "What we doee now? This is rather awkward for plotee."

"He must not be allowed to go away until you have settled Harkaway, that is flat."

"Put him in some holee."

"Haven't you got a cellar you can shove him into?"

"Yes. Veree good dry cellar, full of emptee teachestees," answered Ah Sing.

"The very thing, nothing could be better. All you have to do, is to bind his hands and feet while he is asleep. It is dark now, and the customers have all gone away."

"Yes," said Ah Sing. "Tea drinkee people gone, only pipe smokers in opium roomee."

"Do it at once then, or he may wake up, and he is a devil to fight, I can tell you," exclaimed Frank Davis.

"Me no fightee man, but stick knifee, first-chop."

"Get a bit of rope and cut along."

"You helpee me to carry in cellar presentlee?" asked Ah Sing. "Too heavee nigger for me to liftee."

Frank nodded assent.

Ah Sing found two pieces of rope, and glided up to Monday like a snake.

The black still slept.

A thin rain was falling, making the air cool and fragrant.

The heavy clouds drifting over the land, indicated that there had been a storm out at sea.

Very gently, Ah Sing encircled Monday's wrists with the rope, which he tied in a triple knot.

"Pullee tightee," he muttered. "Don't wantee him to be an escaper."

Kneeling down, he put the other bit of rope around his ankles.

He had just time to fasten the knot when Monday awoke.

As he opened his eyes, he also opened his mouth, and indulged in a yawn, after which he tried to stretch his limbs.

Great was his surprise, not unmixed with consternation, when he found he could not move hand or foot.

He discovered, however, that he could move both feet at once.

This he did, catching the retreating Ah Sing a heavy and uncomfortable blow under the chin.

It sent him heels over head down the half-dozen wooden steps which led up to the verandah.

He fell on his back in the muddy road, and began to moan and groan.

Frank Davis came out on hearing the noise.

A dozen large Chinese lanterns were hanging to the verandah, and had been lighted some time.

This light enabled him to see that Monday could not move, which was a great relief to him.

It was not his desire to have a conflict with the black.

Everyone who had ever fought with Monday had a wholesome dread of him, and gave the black a wide berth.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed in triumph, "you are fairly cornered, you lump of black ivory."

Monday's unusually joyous countenance fell.

"Frank Davis, by golly!" he cried, "caught in um trap for certain, all through going to sleep. Fool! that's me—fool! and nothing else. Tie um hands and feet, and make helpless. I'm no more use than a baby."

"How do you like doing the private detective business, my highly intelligent coloured friend?"

"Don't want to hold any talk with you."

"Because you don't know what to say," replied Frank Davis. "You are discounted, I may say double discounted. It was lucky I came here and saw you, for Ah Sing did not know you. Now I shall be able to have some fun with you, and be revenged on Harkaway too."

Monday's eyes flashed.

"What you going to do to him?" he demanded.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" sneered Davis. "Fish and find out, that's good enough for you."

There was a loud wail from Ah Sing.

"What's the matter with you, you terra-cotta image?" asked Frank Davis; "you aren't dying."

"Yes, me am a dyer," answered Ah Sing. "That nigger kickee me under the chinee and makee my teethe all rattlers."

"Brace up and rub your jaw."

"Talkee in painee."

"Don't talk then; you can use your arms, I suppose? Come and put this chap in the cellar you spoke of."

"Allee rightee, me makee an effortee," replied Ah Sing.

"Look sharp, you are such a time. I want to get home to my supper," said Frank.

"Nigger givee me all the supperee I wantee."

He got up after making this doleful remark, and unlocked a door under the verandah.

This led into the cellar, which was spacious and dry. Scores of tea chests were scattered around, and in one corner was a large tin receptacle full of opium.

Ah Sing had stolen this, in small packages, from the works which he superintended for Josiah Davis.

Davis and the Chinaman now took hold of Monday and carried him into the cellar.

They deposited him on the floor, giving him a tea-chest for a pillow.

"Suppose he shouts and makes a noise, so as to attract attention?" remarked Frank. "That won't do, you know. We must guard against that."

"Me knockee him on the headee," Ah Sing replied.

"You may be asleep, or engaged about your business in the day-time. Better gag him."

"Don't knowee how to doee thatee, boss."

"I'll show you."

Frank went outside, took down a lantern, and groped about till he found two pieces of wood, which he cut to a certain length and bound together with a piece of string.

Then, on coming back, he said—

"Now, my man, open your mouth. I've got a pill for you."

"Let um go, you have no right to keep me here!" exclaimed Monday. "Um go to a magistrate when you let um loose."

Davis bestowed a malignant look upon him.

"Perhaps you will never get out. Think yourself lucky that I don't put a bullet in you," he replied. "Open that potato trap of yours, double quick! Come, hurry up!"

Monday was obliged to submit.

The gag was put in his mouth. He was now unable to move or speak, and had the pleasant prospect before him of remaining in that condition for probably twenty hours.

Ah Sing and Davis retired; the door was locked and Monday was alone.

The cellar was close and stuffy. Sand flies and mosquitos began to worry him; but luckily for his peace of mind and body, the drowsy feeling produced by the opium-soaked cigar he had smoked, again overcame him.

He went off into a sound sleep.

CHAPTER XLII.

A DANGEROUS POSITION—JACK HARKAWAY AND MOLE ARE IN THE POWER OF THE CHINAMAN.

It was about ten o'clock on the morning following the day that Monday fell into the trap.

At the entrance to the village of Chinatown Jack and

Mole dismounted, from mules they had ridden from Singapore.

Telling the guide to let the mules graze, as they should not want them again for several hours, they walked on.

They were on the look-out for the strictly reliable Ah Sing's pagoda house.

In a short time it greeted their sight.

Ah Sing had been early to the opium factory, seen that everything was going on properly, and returned early.

He was on the look-out for his expected visitors.

A smile of cunning, mingled with avarice, lighted up his countenance.

Part of the night he had been awake arranging his plans.

He had determined to decoy Jack and the professor into the country where he could stupefy them with opium. Then he would, as ordered by Josiah and Frank Davis, cut off both of Harkaway's ears.

Going back to the pagoda house, he intended to liberate Monday, whose death he did not wish to have on his mind.

It would not be safe for him to remain in Chinatown.

He meant to escape into the interior of the island, where he had friends, and hide himself.

In ten days or less, the steamer would sail with Jack and his friends for England.

All danger of reprisals would be over.

"Good-day, my friend," exclaimed Jack. "Is our breakfast ready?"

"It is awaiting your honourable and esteemed appetite," replied Ah Sing.

"What have you got?"

"Tea of the best, pigeons, chickens, steak of cowbeef, chopee from the woolee sheepee, bread, cakes, and the usual condimentees," was the rejoinder.

"That will do. I am glad you have left puppy dogs, rats, bird's-nest soup, and other Chinese delicacies out of your bill of fare."

"I prepare a breakfastee fit for the distinguished Englishmanee. Please follow."

With a bow, and a childlike, innocent smile, Ah Sing led the way to the top of the house.

This was flat, surrounded by a railing three feet high, up which climbed creepers of various hues.

There was the beautiful blue of the *Westaria,* mingled with the bright red of the *canariensis.*

About eight feet above the roof, was suspended an awning to keep off the rays of the sun.

Chairs and tables were scattered about, and two or three straw mattresses were put down for those who wanted to lounge.

A splendid view of the adjacent poppy-fields was to be obtained.

They were one mass of glorious colour.

Ah Sing disappeared to bring up the repast he had prepared for them.

"This is lovely," remarked Jack.

"Yes," replied Mole, "the sight will long linger in the memory."

To the left was a wood of palm-trees, through an opening in which could be seen a small lake embosomed in the foliage.

In the centre of the lake was an island of small proportions, also covered with trees.

Principal among these was the Magnolia, now full of flowers.

"What is that over there?" asked Jack, when the Chinaman returned, and placed the tray on the table.

"The Lake of Pleasure, and the Island of Delight," replied Ah Sing.

"Are there fish in it?"

"Veree many fishee."

"What kind?"

"Gold and silver. The highly distinguished visitors to me often go fishee."

"By Jove! that's a good idea. We will make a day of it," said Jack. "Have you tackle?"

"Rodee, linee, plentee, and little wormees for baitees," Ah Sing answered.

"Good. I don't care much about the opium factory; that will be dry work."

"True. Who cares how the accursed stuff is made?" observed Mole.

"I prefer fishing," continued Jack. "We will order dinner and come back here. Are you listening, Sing?"

The representative of the Flowery Land nodded.

"Smokee pipe on the Island of Delight?" he said.

"That will do. Bring the pipes with you."

"And I say," exclaimed Mole.

"What is the desire of the most learned?"

"Bring something to drink with you. What have you got?"

"Some champagne drinkee, brandy drinkee," answered Ah Sing.

Mr. Mole's eyes glistened.

"A very capital mixture," exclaimed he, smacking his lips. "We will have some of both, my good fellow."

They sat down to breakfast, which they enjoyed exceedingly, their appetites being sharpened by their ride.

"It's funny," said Jack, "that we saw nothing of Monday before we started."

"He often goes off like that. I believe he drinks!" Mole rejoined.

"No, he does not. You can't accuse him of that."

"You could not tell it by his nose; it is the wrong colour to show it. Ha, ha!"

The professor laughed at his own joke.

"Yours is like a flaming beacon, sir," remarked Jack.

"All the sun, I assure you. My skin is tender. I can't stand these high latitudes."

"Is that it?"

"The vicinity of the equator does not agree with my complexion," replied Mole.

When Ah Sing again appeared, they had finished eating.

He had a basket containing wine in one hand, and rods, lines, and a box of bait in the other.

"Allee rightee now, excellencees?" he asked.

"Right as rain," responded Jack. "By the way, did you see a Malay here last evening?"

"No, sir," answered Ah Sing, carelessly. "Blackee manee no comee here. All regular customers, Chinee."

Then he watched a butterfly that was hovering over the creepers.

Mr. Mole looked in the basket.

He was satisfied at seeing two bottles of wine and two of brandy, together with pipes, and a ball of opium.

Descending the stairs, they went out into the quaintly-built street, Ah Sing leading the way through the poppy-fields.

Thousands of butterflies, all ablaze with colour like the flower, were flying about.

The eye grew tired of so much colour at last.

It was a relief to reach the green woodland, shrub, bamboo, and cacti, growing between the trees.

There were half-a-dozen small boats moored to a raft.

Ah Sing gave one to each of them, taking another himself.

"Fishee from boatee, or from Island?" he inquired.

"Which do you think best, Mister Strictly Reliable," Jack asked.

"Allee samee, excellencee."

"I should like the island, for I am afraid of being swamped in this little craft," said Mole.

"You can swim, and a dip would not hurt you."

"There's the danger of water-snakes."

"Yes," put in Ah Sing. "Veree nastee snakee in water."

At this moment, a long thin snake, with black and white hoops, came up with a spiral motion.

"Lookee! lookee!" cried Ah Sing.

"What is it?"

"Water-snakee; him come up to have little peep at us."

Mr. Mole was greatly alarmed.

He turned sharply round.

The boat inclined to one side, Mole lost his balance, and stretching out his arms fell with a dismal scream into the lake.

That which he had hoped to avoid had in reality happened to him.

It was deep near the raft, and he sank like a stone.

Frightened by the noise and splash of the catastrophe, the snake shot down to the bottom.

So did Professor Mole.

The snake was as much frightened as he was, and did not make any attempt to molest him.

A smile stole over Ah Sing's face as he fished up the professor's straw hat.

"Divee like a duck," he remarked. "Veree funnee. Heap comical, you betee."

In a short time Mole regained the surface, gasping for breath, and blowing like a whale or a grampus.

The force of imagination made him think that a snake was twined round his leg.

His face was convulsed with terror, and his eyes were nearly starting out of his head.

"Look out, sir," laughed Jack. "Beware of the steam roller!"

"Hang rollers; help me out. A serpent is biting me—in fact, a dozen are at me."

"So many as that?"

"Yes, yes. I descended into a nest of them. Help me out."

He was clinging to the edge of the raft.

But he had no power to raise himself.

From his appearance, Jack thought that he was going to have an attack of epileptic vertigo.

He went to his assistance at once.

With difficulty the professor, badly scared, and dripping with water, was hauled on to the raft.

His first care was to look for water-snakes about his legs.

He was deeply gratified to find that there were none there.

"Narrow escape," he exclaimed. "I have shaken them off, I suppose. Ugh! ugly things, nasty, horrid!"

He looked at Ah Sing.

"My Chinese friend," he added, "I have drunk enough lake water to float a canoe. Give me some brandy."

"Drawee corkee," replied Ah Sing.

Suiting the action to the word, he poured out some of the spirit into a glass.

The professor snatched it from his hand, and drank greedily.

"Ah!" he said, drawing a deep breath of satisfaction. "How shall I sing the praises of this noble spirit? All honour to the man who invented it."

"You will soon dry sir, and if you don't take a chill you will be none the worse for your ducking," Jack remarked.

They got into the boats again, Mole steaming like a geyser under the hot sun.

It was a short scull to the island, and, having found a suitable spot, they landed, made their boats fast to the limb of a tree and began fishing.

With the dislike of an Oriental to do anything of an active nature that is not absolutely necessary, Ah Sing sat down, hoisted an umbrella made of strips of bamboo and paper, and looked on.

The fish bit freely, and the sport was good, though the fish were of a small size, the largest scaling half-a-pound only.

Making frequent applications to the bottle, Mr. Mole, in the course of a couple of hours grew sleepy.

"Let us give over for a time and try a pipe, Harkaway?" he exclaimed.

"I'm agreeable," replied Jack. "These fish are too tame to afford me any excitement."

"What a fellow you are for that kind of thing, so full of dash and go!"

"I like something to stir the blood, and make the heart beat, sir."

"I don't; that's the difference between us, you know, although you must admit I am bravery itself."

"When there is no danger," replied Jack.

"Come, come, don't say that; I can't stand your nasty snacks," protested the professor; "it is base ingratitude."

"I take it back, sir—you are brave. Didn't you dive after a water-snake just now?"

"That will do; I accept your apology. Light up the pipes, my pig-tailed friend. I am anxious to travel to the realms of bliss in an opium dream, do you hear!"

"Allee rightee, boss; me fixee you first-chop pipee," Ah Sing replied.

Jack allayed his thirst with some of the sparkling vintage of champagne, which proved to be of rather an inferior quality.

Ah Sing was no judge of wine, his potations being confined to tea and a white Chinese spirit made from rice.

The brandy bottle was Mole's friend again, and by this time he was getting what the sailors call groggy or half-seas over.

He and Jack selected shady spots under the trees to lie down.

Filling the pipes with opium, Ah Sing lighted them, and handed one to each.

Soon Jack became conscious of a pleasant feeling creeping over him.

He was lifted away, as it were, to a fairer land, where the trees were of gold, bearing precious stones of varied hues.

Beautiful women, clad in rich garments, handed him dainty dishes and drinks, such as he had never seen before.

He was entirely unconscious of his surroundings.

The sweetest music floated in the air, enchanted his soul, and made every fibre of his being thrill with pleasurable emotion.

Ah Sing glided up to him like a snake.

The loud snoring of Mole indicated that he, too, slept soundly.

Both were under the influence of the insidious narcotic.

With a piece of silken cord, Ah Sing bound Jack's wrists together.

He was rendered helpless if he should wake up.

The Chinaman then produced a knife, which was as sharp as a new razor.

His eyes scintillated, and he showed his gleaming teeth.

"Now cuttee ears off for Mr. Davis, then runnee away and hidee for a time," muttered Ah Sing.

Jack was insensible to his danger.

He had fallen into the trap laid for him.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MONDAY BECOMES DESPERATE.

It can readily be imagined how furious Monday was when he found himself a close prisoner in Ah Sing's cellar.

He was totally unable to move hand or foot, or to utter a cry.

How frantically he blamed himself for being so unsuspecting.

He felt convinced that the cigar given him to smoke had been drugged; for he had the peculiar faculty of being able to keep awake easily for forty-eight hours at a stretch.

Often had he done so in Limbi, and since he left.

That Chinamen were tricky, he knew, but he always fancied he was more cunning than they were.

For once he had been outwitted.

His capture, he was sure, was part of a deep plot on the part of Frank Davis, of which Jack was to be the victim.

And he (Monday) was unable to warn him.

For his own fate he cared little. It was of his master he thought, and for whom he trembled.

In the morning, Jack was coming to Chinatown, and unfortunately the crafty Ah Sing had discovered that he was his servant.

As the night wore on he suffered from thirst, but those pangs were forgotten in his acute mental distress.

His thoughts were bent entirely in devising some means of escape.

In vain he racked his tortured and fevered brain.

The cords defied his most frantic efforts to burst them.

He rolled over and over in his intense agony, and was bathed in a profuse prespiration.

Suddenly his hand touched something sharp, which pricked the skin of his knuckles.

All was dark as pitch in the cellar, though, through a crack in the top of the door, he could see a star twinkling.

He rubbed the back of his hand against the substance that had pricked him.

Some anxious consideration induced him, from its jagged shape, to believe it was an old saw.

Nor was he mistaken.

At some time or other, the saw had been thrown into the cellar, and had stuck in the earth with the teeth upward.

Gradually it had sunk, or been forced in farther and farther, until it was firmly embedded.

Here was a slight chance for the faithful fellow.

He could possibly keep on rubbing the cord round his wrists against the teeth of the saw until he so frayed it, that he would be able to force it asunder.

It was a long and difficult task.

To rub hard would be dangerous, for he might displace the saw, and if it fell on its side, it would be rendered useless.

With the utmost gentleness he set to work.

For hours he kept on, and could feel that he was making but slow progress.

Nevertheless he was progressing, and his heart beat high with hope.

He could not help scratching his skin now and again, which made the blood come.

The pain of the smart he disregarded, because the blood fell on the cord and softened it.

Morning came, yet the sunlight but fitfully came in here and there at the door.

His keen eyes, however, saw that the cord was parting strand by strand.

Noises began to be heard in the street.

Carts went by, and people going to work indulged in conversation and laughter.

Monday grew desperate.

He wanted to be out and about before Jack arrived, so that he might waylay him.

It was useless, however, to be precipitate.

The weary hours dragged their slow length along.

All at once he gave a more energetic jerk than usual.

The saw was dislodged and fell on its side.

Tears fell down Monday's cheeks, and he could have sobbed aloud at his bad luck, if it had not been for the gag.

For some time he lay as if stunned.

It seemed as if all his patient toil was to go for nothing.

A feeling of despair came over him, and he gave himself up for lost, as well as his master.

He was roused from his lethargy by hearing the sound of Jack's voice in the street outside.

Jack was talking to Mr. Mole after breakfast, as they went with Ah Sing to fish in the lake.

This fairly maddened Monday.

He tried to throw up his arms with a prodigious effort.

To his unspeakable joy he succeeded in doing so.

The cord, already worn down to a thin point, gave way and fell from his lacerated wrists.

So far Monday was free.

He acknowledged that this was a great advance, but there was more to be done.

With a sigh of relief he removed the gag from his mouth, and was able to breathe freely again.

His jaws were so stiff that it was with pain and difficulty he shut his mouth.

"Nice thing," he muttered. "Sha'n't be able to do much in um eating line for some time. Suck um egg, I reckon."

He next untied the rope that fastened his legs.

When this was done, he rose to his feet and stretched himself.

Now he was confronted with the difficulty of getting out of the cellar, which was locked on the outside.

It was stoutly made of teak wood, such as ships are built of, and the hinges were firm and solid.

To cry out would undoubtedly have brought assistance in time.

Yet it might, he thought, bring Ah Sing, with some of his friends and neighbours, to wreak his vengeance upon him.

What would be easier than for Ah Sing to declare that he was a burglarious thief?

The indignant crowd would fall upon and half kill him.

He knew very well how cruel the Chinese were to all criminals, whether of their own race or another.

They thought nothing of taking the law into their own hands, and administering condign punishment to an offender.

Taking up the old saw, he advanced to the door and tried to prise it open.

For a long time he could make no impression on the lock.

At length he got the saw well under it, gave a jerk, and it fell on the floor.

A gentle gust of wind blew the door open.

Monday, holding himself proudly erect, walked out.

Stepping up to the entrance of the Pagoda house, he saw a Chinaman sweeping the dust off the steps.

Monday had his knife concealed in his clothes; that had not been taken from him.

He intended, if he got the chance, to be revenged on Ah Sing for the scurvy trick he had played him.

It would be dangerous, however, to attack him in the midst of his people.

They would do anything for Ah Sing.

He was quite a small autocrat in his way, for he had the

power at the opium-works of engaging or dismissing any workman.

Monday had to watch his opportunity.

"What your name?" asked Monday.

"Loo Choo," was the reply of the highly industrious order of goodee workers.

"Do um know a gentleman called Ah Sing?"

"The strictly honourable and highly respectable is my master."

"Where is um respectable?" continued Monday.

"Him gone fishee in the lake," answered Loo Choo.

"Anybody go with him?"

"Two white gentlemans from Singapore. They go fishee also, with the strictly honourable Ah Sing."

Monday's heart gave a big throb.

He was on the track at last.

His primary duty was to find his master, and save him from the machinations of the enemy.

But, in aiding Harkaway, he might be able to settle accounts with Ah Sing also.

"I have very important business with the strictly right honourable, his excellency Ah Sing," continued Monday.

"Is it of the most pressing?" asked Loo Choo.

"Won't admit of a moment's delay."

"Then you'd better walkee through poppy-fields to the lake. Lookee! it is over there."

He held up his hand, pointing to the lake, which could be seen among the trees like a sheet of crystal.

"It is callee the Lake of Pleasure," continued Loo Choo. "In the middlee is the Island of Delight. Plaps findee Ah Sing there."

Monday nodded his head.

He did not stop to hear any more.

At his best pace, he struck through the poppy-fields, hoping that he might yet be in time to save his master from the unknown danger which threatened him.

When he reached the lake, he saw Ah Sing on the island, but discovered no trace of Harkaway or Mole.

This was because they were lying down, and were hidden by the grass and flowers which grew around them.

Ah Sing's back was turned towards the shore.

Jumping into a boat, Monday seized a scull, and standing in the stern paddled it Indian fashion.

He was careful to make no noise.

When within a few yards of the island, he saw Ah Sing draw a knife and bend over Jack, who was now visible.

Straining every nerve, Monday forced the boat to the land.

He sprang like a tiger on Ah Sing.

It was the crisis of Jack's fate.

Monday was just in time to seize Ah Sing by the pig-tail, and jerk him on to his back.

The knife fell from his hand. It was unstained by blood.

Jack was saved from mutilation.

A moment later, and he would have lost his ears.

Monday held on to the Chinaman's pig-tail with the power of a vise.

He dragged him this way and pulled him that; he lifted him up and let him drop.

"Ho, ho!" he laughed; "um too clever, after all, for um Chinee. Ho, ho! Now we settle um. Mast' Jack, you wake up and see the fun. Mist' Mole, get up, sar.'

There was no movement on the part of either of them.

Monday saw the opium pipes.

"Ah," he added, "give um opium joint. Artful dodge. Well, no matter. Not poison. Wake up soon."

He danced up and down in the exuberance of his glee.

"Lettee go; me do no harmee," said Ah Sing.

"Confess. What were you going to do with that knife—kill?"

"No killee."

"What then?"

"Mister Davis order me to cut off both ears of the mandarin, Harkaway."

"Gorramighty!" exclaimed Monday, "that am um large order. Ho, ho! Me show you."

Picking up Ah Sing's knife, he made a sudden slash at his pig-tail.

It was severed at a blow.

He held it up in triumph.

Ah Sing sank on his knees with a look of abject misery and despair on his face.

According to Chinese ideas, he was disgraced forever.

It was the honoured growth of many, many years, and at his age he could never hope to recover its loss.

CHAPTER XLIV.

BESIEGED ON THE ISLAND.

At first, the abject misery of Ah Sing was pitiable to witness.

He would much rather have lost his ears than his beloved pig-tail.

To lose this was to lose caste among his compatriots.

The Chinaman's pig-tail is his pride and delight.

Without it he is nothing.

He feels, when it is gone, as a woman would if her hair was cropped short to her head.

Grovelling on the ground, he uttered dismal moans and groans.

Then his mood changed.

He gnashed his teeth with rage and foamed at the mouth.

Monday laughed at his distress, and feeling in his clothes to satisfy himself that he had no concealed weapons, turned his attention to his young master.

He shook Jack and also Mr. Mole, but he could not succeed in rousing them.

Both were deeply steeped in the opium trance.

"Very funny thing they sleep so hard," he said to himself. "If Mist' Mole drink, that not the case with Massa Jack. He always keep um head level. No mistake 'bout that."

He cast his eyes on the grass, and saw the basket with the bottles in it.

"Good!" he exclaimed—"jus' what this child wants; him dry as an oven. Have um fine drink now."

He opened a bottle of champagne and greedily drank half the contents out of the bottle.

"Save um life," he went on; "lovely! Jus' like velvet going down 'um throat."

Suddenly the idea occurred to him that the wine might be poisoned.

Yes, that would account for the prostrate condition of Jack and the professor.

He would be similarly attacked before long.

His dusky countenance lengthened, and he began to feel imaginary pains in the region of his stomach.

All this time he had forgotten the presence of Ah Sing.

A splashing noise attracted his attention.

Looking around he saw that the crafty Chinese had got into one of the boats, and tied the others to it, and was sculling towards the land as fast as he could.

Escape from the island was effectually cut off, except by swimming.

Monday did not know how to act in this emergency, for he and his friends were virtually prisoners.

He had not intended to let Ah Sing escape, because he was afraid he would create mischief.

The fellow, however, had been too sharp for him, and had, as the saying is, stolen a march.

"Never mind," said Monday. "We all three know how to swim, and when Mast' Jack and Mist' Mole open their eyes, we very soon get on the land, and so to um home."

He looked at the shore as he spoke, and saw Ah Sing putting dry grass under the boats, which he had piled together.

To this he set a light.

In ten minutes there was a rare conflagration, the flames and smoke ascending to a great height.

They could be seen for some distance through the opening among the palm trees.

"What the debble him up to now?" mused Monday. "Poor kind of spite to burn um boat."

He waved his hand to Ah Sing.

"Hi!" he shouted, "you Chinee nigger, hi!"

His voice was easily audible.

"I givee you hi! hi! presently," was the reply in a vengeful tone.

"None of your cheek, or I'll swim over and tan your hide another colour!"

"Tryee!" sneered Ah Sing. "When you come near enough, me breakee headee with oar. Crackee skullee —so!"

Ah Sing took up an oar, and made as if he was hitting an imaginary body in the water.

He meant that he would not allow anybody to land.

Nor was this an idle threat.

The Chinaman was thoroughly master of the situation.

From his position on the bank, the Chinaman could have readily kept the three of them off for any length of time.

Or, if they persisted in an attempt to land, he could stun and drown them.

Monday shook his head.

"Him artful nig'," he muttered "Don't like um game at all. There's more behind, I'm thinking."

In this conjecture Monday was quite right.

There was a good deal more to come than he had any idea of.

Ah Sing was determined to have his revenge for the loss of his pig-tail, and, at the same time, he hoped to be able to carry out Frank Davis's instructions regarding Harkaway.

Many members of his family resided in Chinatown, and he knew that they would rally round him.

In fact, all the Chinese in the place were at his beck and call.

To cut off a Chinaman's pig-tail is quite enough to raise a riot anywhere.

If a disturbance took place, and Jack, Monday, and Mole got injured, it would be difficult to fix the blame on anyone in particular.

Ah Sing was burning the boats as a signal.

His fellow-countrymen would see the smoke and flames.

They would hurry from home and factory to his side, and help him to besiege the island.

It would soon be surrounded by two or three score of howling, fanatical Chinese.

Most, if not all of them, would have guns and knives.

To fire from the shore would be practicable; to swim over with a knife, quite easy.

It threatened to be a terrible night for Jack and his friends.

Monday was alarmed, he scarcely knew why.

"What you going to do next?" he asked.

Ah Sing produced a pistol from a pocket inside his blouse.

Cocking it he presented it at Monday and fired.

The bullet fell into the water, a few yards from the Malay.

"Um getting hot," Monday muttered. "Pistol not come near enough. Gun do um trick though. Getting what Mast' Jack call 'rather sultry.' Perhaps be gory later on. How to get out of this fix, I'm sure I don't know."

He shook his fist at Ah Sing.

"You coward beast of a Chinee. Your father is being burnt now, and your grandfather, and all um ancestors. Their bones are cursed!" Monday continued.

"A wisee man keepee a silent tongue," replied Ah Sing.

"Where's your pig-tail, ha! ha!"

"Laughee now, cryee soon."

"That's your opinion, perhaps—it isn't mine. Let me see how far my little pop-gun will carry um ball."

Monday produced his pistol, and fired at Ah Sing.

It was a superior weapon, manufactured by an English firm, which Jack had bought, and of which he had made him a present.

Ah Sing smiled in his jaundiced, sickly manner, and stretched out his right hand in token of derision.

Because his pistol had not carried across the lake, he fancied the Malay's would not.

In this belief he found himself highly mistaken.

The bullet found him, and, strangely enough, it struck the hand he was holding up.

In a second the third finger was entirely smashed, and hanging on by a piece of skin down the palm.

The pain was acute, and his dismay great.

With a howl like a wounded wolf, Ah Sing retreated behind the burning boats.

He was, so far, getting the worst of it.

"How um like that?" asked Monday. "Pretty good shot, I think. Chinee skunk take a back seat now."

Suddenly he was startled at hearing the beating of several gongs.

The Chinese always beat gongs when they are excited, pleased or surprised.

It was evident that Ah Sing, by his big beacon fire, had roused the attention of his friends.

The alarm was spreading right and left, and they were

leaving their work and occupations to come and render him such assistance as lay in their power.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon; the sun was declining, and a thin haze was rising over the lake.

Monday went up to Jack, and taking a thorn from a mimosa bush, ran it into his flesh.

"Wake up, Mast' Jack! For heaven's sake, stir yourself!" he said.

Jack yawned and stretched himself, opened his eyes, and saw his faithful servant.

"You here!" he remarked. "By Jove, how did you find me out? Oh, how bad I feel! Nice dreams, but such an awakening! My head feels about half as big again as it ought to feel. I am so low-spirited, too. I shouldn't mind drowning myself in the lake."

It was the usual depression consequent on smoking opium.

Mr. Mole sprang up.

"No more should I, Jack; it really drives me to drink. Where is the eau-de-vie? Give me some of the three-star brandy. Oh, dear, what anacreontic follies I have seen in mysleep! Glad you have come, Monday. I like to have a nigger about me, it saves such a lot of trouble," said he.

Monday, who had roused him in the same way he had Jack, regarded him indignantly.

"Be um own nigger," he replied.

"Don't get vexed, my good fellow."

"Get 'em brandy best way um can. Want my services in another way soon."

"How's that?" asked Mr. Mole. "We will go home now and all will be serene."

"Ha! don't know all. Got to reach home first."

"What's to stop us?"

"The Chinese people heap big plot against you," said Monday. "I only come here jus' in time to save Mast' Jack's life."

Jack looked at the black with astonishment.

"Is that true?" he asked.

"Jus' as true as I'm standing up alive here. Me tell um all. Listen, sare."

Monday related all that had happened since he left Singapore to make inquiries about Ah Sing, and find out what was likely to happen in Chinatown.

Jack's face assumed an earnest look. He had come out for a day's fishing, and he found that he was in for what seemed like a night's fighting.

His placid contentment passed away.

He became anxious and worried, and his eagle eyes sparkled with excitement; but at the same time he preserved his self-control.

At every crisis, Jack was invariably calm and confident. Never did he lose his head.

"This is a plot of Davis's," he said, "and I have been fool enough to tumble into the pit."

"We are in a nice boat," observed the professor. "It is just like my luck when I come out with you."

"Who would have thought it, sir?"

"You should have stayed at home—don't be so venturesome. We owe our lives to this poor, faithful, uneducated savage, who has outwitted the Chinaman."

"Me better man than him," replied Monday, grinning.

The sound of the gongs came nearer, and yet more near.

"Do you hear that, sir?" cried Jack. "We are in the power of the Chinese wretches. There are no white men near here. They will besiege us on this island."

"Bah! the boats are burnt."

"But they have firearms which will carry as far as we are. They can swim like fishes, and possess knives."

"It jolly bad bit of business," Monday remarked.

"Our lives do not seem worth an hour's purchase," rejoined Harkaway.

"Let us plunge into the water, swim across, and make a dash for it. I'm game if you are," Mole suggested.

"That would be to throw ourselves into their hands. Practically, we are even now all surrounded. The Chinese are coming from every side."

"What shall we do, then?"

"Hold the fort—that is to say, the island. We have the advantage of trees here. See! five are growing together; their trunks will make a shield for us. You and I have pistols."

"Shall we fire at them?"

"Only if they attempt to swim over and land," Jack answered. "Keep all your cartridges."

"Me got um bag full," said Monday.

"Excellent! We shall need them all before morning, it strikes me. My great hope is in Harvey. He is bad with the ague, but I told him this morning before we started where we were going, and ordered dinner for seven o'clock. If we don't turn up, he and Emily will guess there is something wrong."

"Good old Harvey—bless him!" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "Your idea of the tree fort is a splendid one. I will retire at once and seek shelter; yes, seek its kindly protection, as I am rather nervous after that confounded opium, and I will, for safety, take the basket and what liquor is left with me."

Carrying the basket with him, the professor went into the natural fort which Jack's quick sight had discovered.

It was admirably adapted for its purpose.

Five trees, with large trunks, grew close together in a semicircle.

No bullet could penetrate through this admirable defence.

To reconnoitre the movements of the enemy it was only necessary to cautiously peep round either corner.

The one danger was, that they might be taken in the rear.

In that case they would have to fight for their lives, and they were all three equally resolved to battle to the death.

Presently, numbers of pig-tailed Chinamen began to assemble in the vicinity of the bonfire.

This was gradually dying out.

Ah Sing could be seen speaking to them in an excited manner, pointing to his head, and evidently explaining the way in which he had lost his much-cherished hair.

Great indignation was expressed by his friends.

Half-a-dozen of the Chinese brandished knives in the air and then plunging into the water, began to swim across the lake.

Twenty more ran round its sides, stopping one by one at intervals, making a cordon.

These were posted as sentinels to prevent the prisoners on the island from escaping.

Others went back to Chinatown to procure guns.

"They are coming, Mast' Jack," said Monday; "we are in for it now, no mistake."

"Chinamen are not a very hard crowd to tackle," replied Jack, "they are soon cowed."

"What you do, sare?"

"Pepper them with my revolver. They know they are acting illegally; the judge at Singapore would soon let them find out that."

"No good think of that; all um folks are Chinee. No white man to prove anything."

"That is true; we have got to defend ourselves."

"Davis at the bottom of this," Monday continued; "wonder he am not here."

"I don't suppose he knows of the turn affairs have taken; if he did, he would not dare to show his face," Jack replied.

The six swimmers had narrowed the distance between them and the island.

"What do you want over here?" asked Jack, loudly.

Ah Sing, who was standing on the bank, took upon himself to respond.

"They comee to fishee," he said.

"They be hanged!" replied Jack. "Do you think I am such a fool as to believe such a yarn?"

"It is the trufee, I swearee."

"Call your men back, or I will fire! Do you hear me? I don't want to injure anybody, but I must protect myself."

"What you shootee poor Chinamanee for? Island not yours. I am one of the strictly honourables."

"Yes, you are, over the left. I would not trust one of your puppy-dog, rat-eating race, farther than I could see him."

"Listen to the most highly respectable," exclaimed Ah Sing.

"I'll not hear a word," shouted Jack. "Call off your sharks; call your blood-hounds back. I know what is meant."

"No harmee; want to make friends, shakee hands."

"Cut throats rather, you yellow-faced humbug."

"No callee," said Ah Sing, doggedly. "Those men my brudders; they go fishee."

"Your brothers, eh? If you have any regard for them, you will tell them to return."

Ah Sing shook his head.

He knew that he was running no great risk, because the resident magistrate in his district was no other than Josiah Davis.

Frank's father would hush up the affair, and protect him if a tragedy took place.

He felt himself at liberty to kill Jack, Mole, and Monday, the pretext for the crime being the cutting off of his pig-tail.

Jack hesitated no longer.

He fired at the foremost swimmer.

The unfortunate man received the ball in the shoulder.

He uttered a wild shriek of pain.

The other five rallied round him, and preventing him from sinking, turned round.

The attack was over for the present.

They were frightened, and seemed bent only on saving his life, for they turned tail and swam back, supporting their wounded friend as best they could.

"Hurrah!" cried Jack, "first blood to our side."

"That was good shot, sare," replied Monday.

"Look out at the rear, I will watch this side. Not a mother's son of them shall land here, you bet."

Monday faced about.

There was an open space between the clump of trees and the next lot, which any one attacking them would have to cross.

Mr. Mole looked round the corner, with a bottle of brandy in one hand, and a pistol in the other.

"If you want assistance, Harkaway, call me," he said. "You know you can always rely on yours truly, Isaac Mole."

"The enemy have suffered a repulse, sir," answered Jack.

"Shall we be able to hold the fort against these barbarians?"

"I hope so, or it will be all up with us."

"It is lucky I am with you," exclaimed Mole. "Somehow my presence always seems to awe savages. I suppose it is owing to my long intercourse with schoolboys, who are little else."

"What do you call yourself?" asked Jack.

"A man amongst men. Certainly a head and shoulders taller, morally, than others," Mole replied, complacently.

All at once, a peculiar sound was heard.

It was the crack of a rifle, and the "ping" of a bullet.

This leaden messenger of death whizzed between the professor and Jack, embedding itself deeply in one of the trees.

A Chinaman had brought down a rifle, and fired from the edge of the lake.

It was a narrow escape.

"Close shave that, sir," said Jack, coolly.

Mr. Mole had vanished.

A sepulchral voice coming from behind the trees, replied—

"Shelter is the thing. No use in locking the stable door when the horse is stolen. Come here. The miscreants will get the range directly, and there will be a dead Harkaway lying about somewhere."

"I thought you were morally superior to the rest of us," Jack replied, laughing.

"So I am. It is nothing to laugh at. I have learnt prudence."

Jack discharged his pistol in defiance.

He did not think it would carry so far, but one of the Chinese fell to the earth.

"By Jove, there's another dog down!" he exclaimed. "Hear the cur yelp."

"So would you, if you had an ounce of lead in you."

"Not I. It isn't my disposition to make a song about trifles."

"Don't brag. Come here," said Mole.

Jack did so.

His last shot had alarmed the Chinamen, and the "Johnnies," as they were called, retreated.

The swimmers reached the land; their wounded companion was dragged out of the water and carried away.

Two litters of bamboo were hastily made, and the two injured ones removed to their homes.

Those who remained crowded together, talking and gesticulating, as if holding a council of war.

Monday was nowhere to be seen.

The enemy made no further forward movement. Indeed, some of them left the scene, and proceeded to their homes.

Jack lighted a cigar and contented himself with watching Ah Sing and his friends.

"Are they tired of the job?" asked Mole.

"No, sir," replied Jack; "the artful beggars are waiting for night to come."

"Do you think so?"

"I'm sure of it. When darkness falls, they will make things lively, take my word for it."

Some shots were heard on the other side of the island.

"A pound to a postage-stamp that is Monday," said Jack.

"I thought he had gone to hide," observed Mole.

"To scout, you mean. You might hide in holes and corners, but my black would not."

"That's right, stick up for your coloured friend," Mole said, sarcastically.

"Why not? He is my friend as much as you are, and has proved himself so on more than one occasion," Jack retorted.

Presently Monday came running up.

He was rather excited, and out of breath.

"I caught two of um Chinee," he exclaimed. "They swim over other side, to sneak up this way."

"What did you do with them?" asked Jack.

"Jus' say, what price you? how much the pair of you? and drop them with my pistol, dead as mutton, sare. Got to keep um eyes open, time like this."

"Sit down and have a drop of brandy."

"That jus' touch the spot," Monday answered. "I'm pretty near beat after las' night, sare."

A drink seemed to revive him wonderfully, and no wonder, as he was thoroughly exhausted through what he had undergone.

"Now lie down and go to sleep," said Jack, kindly. "I'll keep watch while you have a much needed forty winks, and will wake you if there is any more over there."

"I'm one of the toughs, Mast' Jack, but I'll have to give in," replied Monday.

"You are not made of iron."

Monday threw himself down, but before he had time to go to sleep, Jack noticed a commotion among the Chinese.

They began to run helter-skelter in all directions.

The strictly reliable and highly respectable Ah Sing was about the first to go.

Soon the place was cleared of them.

"Get up, Monday," cried Jack.

The black was on his feet in a moment.

"Anyone coming, sare?" he asked.

"I don't know, the heathen are bolting like mad."

"That am good news. Glad to see back of um rubbish like that."

They waited expectantly for a few minutes.

Then they beheld a half-dozen of Singapore policemen, with a gentleman at their head, come to the lake.

"By heaven!" exclaimed Jack, "it is Harvey with some constables. Bravo, Dick! I thought he would not rest."

He left the shelter of the trees, and showed himself, followed by Mole and Monday.

"Harkaway!" shouted Harvey.

"Here I am, all right up to date," was the reply.

"Hurrah! Have you been in danger?"

"Rather!"

"I thought so. During the day I grew uneasy about you, and going to the head of the police, got a squad, and came on here. At Chinatown, we heard that Ah Sing was after some white men at the lake, who had been insulting and assaulting him."

"It is false; he was the aggressor! You are just in time, and I can never thank you enough for your timely succour," replied Jack. "I will explain all presently."

"Frank Davis, I suppose."

"No doubt of it. Another trap! I won't give him a chance again, though."

"That fellow ought to be born again," said Harvey. "But I say, old chappie, how are you going to get over?"

"Swim it," Jack answered.

He set the example by plunging into the water. Monday followed, and Mr. Mole nervously brought up the rear.

Speedily Jack was shaking hands with Harvey.

The Chinamen, afraid of the Singapore police, whose assistance Dick had invoked on behalf of his friend, dispersed.

They did not attempt any further acts of violence.

Their return to the city was accomplished in peace.

During the remainder of their stay at Singapore, which was very brief, they neither saw nor heard anything more of Frank Davis.

When word was brought them that the steamer was ready to sail for Europe, they were all delighted, especially Emily and Mr. Mole.

While he was residing in Singapore, Jack had made a wonderful collection of guns, bows, spears, and all sort of things he thought would be interesting to the good folks at home.

Six boxes, or rather packing-cases, were filled with curiosities of savage and tropical life.

He had enough to start a museum.

And with all this he had a supply of live stock, including monkeys, parrots, and even a snake or two.

When he wrote home, he spoke in the most affectionate and loving terms of Emily.

He wanted to make sure of a welcome for the poor orphan whom he loved so fondly.

She had no one but him to look to now.

He was her only, her sole friend.

CHAPTER XLV.

HOME AGAIN.

Luggage was not a consideration to our travellers.

All they possessed they had bought at Singapore.

Monday had attired himself in canvas shirt, trousers, and jacket, with a straw hat.

Harvey said he looked a very intelligent and decent nigger indeed.

They went on board the steamer, and made a rapid passage to London, without encountering any accident.

This was a wonder, Jack remarked, considering he was on board.

Harvey went to his father's house in the suburbs.

Mr. Mole took up his abode at an hotel.

Jack and Emily, with Monday, went by train to Mr. Bedington's house.

They were not unexpected, because the boys had telegraphed from Singapore, informing them of their safety, and their probable speedy arrival.

It was a lovely evening in autumn, as the fly drove up to the house.

Emily's heart beat quicker than Jack's.

"If your friends should not be kind to me," she said, "I shall die."

Jack pressed her hand.

"Do not fear on that account," he said softly.

In a few minutes he was shaking his father by the hand, and being kissed by his mother.

"My boy, my darling!" exclaimed Mrs. Bedington, "we never expected to see you again. What perils you must have gone through!"

"A few, mother," replied Jack. "I shall astonish you when I tell you some stories."

"So you have had enough of the sea, John?" observed his father.

"Enough and to spare," answered Jack.

Emily remained timidly in the background.

"But," replied Mrs. Bedington, "where is little Emily of whom you spoke in your letter which came overland from Aden?"

"Emmy, where are you?" cried Jack.

Emily stepped forward.

"My dear child," continued Mrs. Bedington, "in future you are to be my daughter. We are not strangers, you know, for we have met before."

Emily sobbed on her shoulder.

"Bless me! what's this?" exclaimed Mr. Bedington.

He saw something black, with white, gleaming teeth, in the passage.

"That's my tame nigger," said Jack.

"Your what?" said his mother.

"Only Monday. It's the cheese, where I've been, to start a private nigger."

"Step forward, Monday, and let's have a look at you," said Mr. Bedington.

Monday came forward, bowing profoundly.

"He saved my life, mother, more than once," remarked Jack.

"That is enough, dear, to secure him a home beneath this roof."

"Monday, mum, do um work for Mast' Jack, but he no wait 'pon other peoples," said the black, drawing himself up.

"He's a king in his own country, and gave up a throne to stick to me," said Jack.

"What a wonderful instance of fidelity!" replied Mrs. Bedington.

"It's true, mother. I'm not cramming you."

"I didn't say you were, John. Have you anything else?"

"Yes; lots of things."

"Any monkeys, parrots, vegetable productions—all the fauna and flora of the distant lands you have visited?"

"I think you will find I have a very neat collection indeed, mother," replied Jack.

Monday was sent to the servants' hall, and was as much an object of amusement to the inmates as they were to him.

Mrs. Bedington and Emily retired upstairs to talk at their ease, while Mr. Bedington and Jack took a turn arm in arm in the garden.

It may be readily imagined that some wonderful stories were related that night.

Jack and Emily were the lion and lioness of the evening.

In a few days, friends came from all parts to see them.

Mr. Crawcour and his masters were among the visitors.

Everyone listened breathlessly to tales of Limbians and Pisangs, of desert islands and volcanoes, of pirates and dungeons.

All concurred in detestation of Hunston.

It was hoped that he had perished in the pirate city. Jack had his doubts.

When questioned upon the subject he would say—

"The beggar has nine lives. I daresay he'll turn up again some day."

For a fortnight the time passed very pleasantly.

He rode his father's best horse, and drove Emily out in his mother's pony carriage.

Monday accompanied them on all occasions, as groom or personal attendant.

After a while Mr. Bedington called Jack into his study.

"Have you had enough of sea," he asked, "or do you still want to follow it as a profession?"

"No," replied Jack; "I don't."

"Now, the question is, what would you like to be?"

"A soldier," replied Jack. "Buy me a commission in the army."

"I have no objection to that, but don't you think you would be all the better for a year or two at a university?" replied Mr. Bedington.

"Just what I should like."

"We wish to study your happiness," answered Mr. Bedington. "Now which university would you like to go to?"

"Oxford; it is more swell than Cambridge," replied Jack.

Mr. Bedington smiled.

"Very well, to Oxford you shall go."

"Thank you very much," replied Jack. "May I ask you another favour?"

"Certainly."

"You are well off?"

"Yes."

"My friend Harvey's parents are poor. He was my friend during my troubles with the savages, and he has often told me it would make a man of him if he could go to Oxford."

"Well?" replied Mr. Bedington.

"Will you pay for him too? I would so like to have him up at Oxford with me."

"Yes," replied Mr. Bedington.

Jack was overjoyed at this concession.

It was settled that he and Harvey should go to Oxford.

Emily went away to Paris to finish her education.

Jack and Harvey had a private tutor at Mr. Bedington's, who in a short time prepared them for their examination.

This they passed with flying colours.

At the commencement of term they were to take up their residence at college.

We shall now introduce to our readers the career of Jack Harkaway at Oxford.

We trust they will follow him with as much interest, and may we hope, pleasure, as they have hitherto been kind enough to do.

Life at Oxford presents temptations and trials, adventures and triumphs, of all of which it will be found that our old friend Jack Harkaway had his full share, and bore himself bravely through everything.

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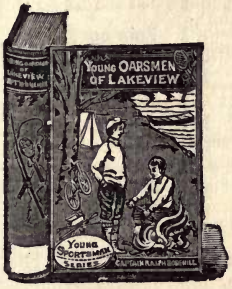

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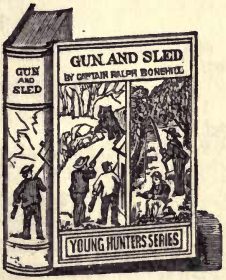

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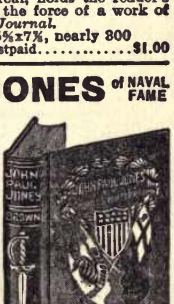

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